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POLITICAL WOMEN.

BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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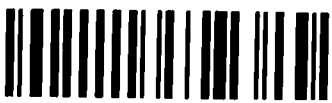
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INTRODUCTION.

In selecting the careers of certain celebrated women who have flung themselves with ardour into the vortex of politics, the author's choice has not been so much an arbitrary one as it might seem, but rather guided by instances in which the adventurous game has not been restricted to the commonplace contentions of the public platform, or the private salon, but played on the grandest scale and on the most conspicuous arena; when Peace and War, crowns and dynasties, have trembled in the balance, and even the fate of a nation has been at stake.

The untoward results of the lives thus devoted—dazzling and heroic as some passages in their dramatic vicissitudes may appear—point the moral of the futility of such pursuit on the part of the gentler sex, and indicate the certainty of the penalty to be paid by those who by venturing into the fervid, exhausting struggle, and rashly courting exposure to the rough blows of the battle of political life, with its coarse and noisy passions, have discovered too late that the strife has done them irreparable injury. In the cases of those selected it will be seen that the fierce contention has commonly involved the sacrifice of conjugal happiness, the welfare of children, domestic peace, reputation, and all the amenities of the gentle life.

That clever women abound in the present day we have undeniable proof—many as clever, no doubt, as that famous philosopheress Madame du Chatelet, who managed at one and the same moment the thread of an intrigue, her cards at piquet, and a calculation in algebra, but who may still lack the qualifications indispensably necessary to make clever politicians. Perhaps, therefore, we might be allowed to suggest that it would be well for ladies who are ambitious of figuring in either or both spheres that politics and diplomacy are special and laborious pursuits, involving a great deal of knowledge as difficult, and in the first instance as repulsive, to acquire as Greek or chemistry. Yet, fully admitting their capacity to qualify themselves intellectually, and supposing them to attain the summit of their ambition of figuring successfully in public life, a grave question still arises—would they thereby increase or diminish their present great social influence? They have now more influence of a certain kind than men have; but if they obtain the influence of men, they cannot expect to retain the influence of women. Nature, it may be thought, has established a fair distribution of power between the two sexes. Women are potent in one sphere, and men in another; and, if they are conscious of the domestic sway they already exercise, they will not imperil it by challenging dominion in a field in which they would be less secure.

Root and bond of the family, woman is no less a stranger by her natural aptitudes than by her domestic ministrations to the general interests of society; the conduct of the latter demands, in fact, a disengagement of heart and mind to which she can only attain by transforming herself, to the detriment of her duties and of her true influence. Ever to subordinate persons to things, never to overstep in her efforts

the strict measure of the possible—those two conditions of the political life are repugnant to her ardent and devoted nature. Even amongst women in whom those gifts are met with in the highest degree, clearness of perception has been almost always obscured by the ardour of pursuit or that of patronage—by the irresistible desire of pushing to the extremity of success her own ideas, and especially those of her friends.

Again, let us imagine political life to resemble a great game at cards, the rules of which have been settled beforehand, and the winnings devoted to the use of the greatest number; well, a woman ought never to take a hand in it. Her place should be at the player's elbow, to warn and advise him, to point out an unperceived chance, to share in his success, more than all to console him, should luck run against him. Thus, whilst all her better qualities would be brought into play, all her weaker would not in any wise be at stake.

We would put it, therefore, to the womanly conscience—Is it not a hundred times more honourable to exercise, so to speak, rights that are legitimately recognised, though wisely limited, than to suffer in consideration, and often in reputation, from an usurpation always certain of being disputed?

It has been the author's endeavour to show the truth of these conclusions by tracing the political career of certain well-born and singularly-gifted women—women whose lofty courage, strength of mind, keen introspection, political zeal, and genius for intrigue enabled them to baffle and make head against some of the greatest political male celebrities of modern history, without, however, winning us over to their opinions or their cause; women who, in some instances, after passing the best period of their lives in political strife,

in fostering civil war, in hatching perilous plots, and who, having cast fortune and all the "gentle life" to the winds, preferred exile to submission, or to wage a struggle as fruitless as it was unceasing; until having arrived at the tardy conviction of its futility, and that they had devoted their existence to the pursuit of the illusory and the chimerical, they found at length repose and tranquillity only in solitude and repentance.

In the stirring careers of certain among these remarkable personages, it will be seen that the mainspring of their political zeal was either the fierce excitement of an overmastering passion, an irresistible proclivity to gallantry, or an absorbing ambition, rather than any patriotic motive. This may go far to explain the singular sagacity, finesse, and energy displayed in their devotion to what otherwise appears alike mischievous and chimerical by those three high-born and splendidly-gifted women who figured so conspicuously in the civil war of the Fronde; and, though so much self-abnegation, courage, constancy, and heroism, well or ill displayed, may obtain some share of pardon for errors it would be wrong to palliate or condone, their example, it is to be hoped, will prove deterrent rather than contagious. La Rochefoucauld—a moralist, though by no means a moral man—who well knew the sex, had seen at work these political women of the time of the Fronde. That opportunity does not appear to have inspired him with an unbounded admiration for them from that point of view.

Of the peril and mischief that fair trio inflicted upon Anne of Austria's great Prime Minister and the State he governed we have an interesting personal record. When, in 1660, Mazarin's policy, triumphant on every side, had added the treaty of the Pyrenees to that of Westphalia, the

honour of the conclusion of the protracted conference held at the *Isle of Pheasants* was reserved for the chief Ministers of the two Crowns—the Cardinal and Don Louis de Haro. The latter congratulated his brother premier on the well-earned repose he was about to enjoy, after such a long and arduous struggle. The Cardinal replied that he could not promise himself any repose in France, for there, he said, the *female* politicians were more to be dreaded than the *male;* and he complained bitterly of the torments he had undergone at the hands of certain political women of the Fronde —notably the Duchess de Longueville, the Duchess de Chevreuse, and the Princess Palatine, each of whom, he asserted, was capable of upsetting three kingdoms.

"You are very lucky here in Spain," he added. "You have, as everywhere else, two kinds of women—coquettes in abundance, and a very few simple-minded domestic women. The former care only to please their lovers, the latter their husbands. Neither the one nor the other, however, have any ambition beyond indulging themselves in vanities and luxuries. They only employ their pens in scribbling billet-doux or love-confessions, neither one nor other bother their brains as to how the grain grows, whilst talking about business makes their heads ache. Our women, on the contrary, whether prudes or flirts, old or young, stupid or clever, will intermeddle with everything. No honest woman," to use the Cardinal's own words, "would permit her spouse to go to sleep, no coquette allow her lover any favour, ere she had heard all the political news of the day. They will see all that goes on, will know everything, and—what is worse—have a finger in everything, and set everything in confusion. We have a trio, among others"—and he again named the three fair factionists above mentioned—"who

threw us all daily into more confusion than was ever known in Babel."

"Thank heaven!" replied Don Louis, somewhat ungallantly, "our women *are* of the disposition seemingly so well known to you. Provided that they can finger the cash, whether of their husbands or their lovers, they are satisfied; and I am very glad to say that they do not meddle with politics, for if they did they would assuredly embroil everything in Spain as they do in France."

It was during the minority of Louis XIV. that Mazarin had but too good cause to complain of the three clever and fascinating women he thus named to Don Louis de Haro, who through their political factions, intrigues, and gallantries gave Anne of Austria's Minister no rest, and for a long period not only thwarted and opposed him, but at intervals placed the State, and even his life, in imminent jeopardy.

Fortunately, in our political history the instances are rare of women who have quitted the sphere of domesticity and private life to take an active part in the affairs of State. We say "fortunately;" for in our opinion such abstention has tended to the happiness of both sexes in England.

In French memoirs, politics and scandal, the jokes of the *salons* and the councils of the Cabinet are inextricably mixed up together, and reveal a political system in which the authority exercised under free institutions by men had been transferred to the art, the tact, and the accomplishments of the female sex. We therein see how much women have done by those subtle agencies. If France was a despotism tempered by epigrams, it was the life of the *salons* which brought those epigrams to perfection; and the *salons* thus constituted a sort of social parliament, which, though unable to stop the supplies or withhold the Mutiny Act, still pos-

sessed a formidable weapon of offence in the power of making the Government ridiculous. Such was the difference existing between two quite distinct modes of government; between Parliamentary government and closet government; between the mace of the House of Commons and the fan of the Duchess de Longueville. England, as we need hardly say, has never had a government of this description. The nearest approach to it which she has ever seen was under the sway of Charles the Second, and, accordingly, the nearest approach to French memoirs which our literature possesses is in the volumes of Pepys and Hamilton. To the almost universal exemption of Englishwomen from taking an overt part in political affairs a striking exception must be made in Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. She is the strongest example, perhaps, in the history of the world —certainly in the history of this empire—of the abuse of female favouritism, and the most flagrant instance of household familiarity on the destinies of mankind. Sarah Jennings, the political heroine of her age, and Viceroy, as she was called, in England, had, however, for contemporaries two other remarkable women, who touched the springs of political machinery quite as powerfully as—if not more powerfully than, save herself, any to be found within the limits of Europe—Madame de Maintenon and the Princess des Ursins. In the respective careers of that other formidable trio of female politicians may be traced the important, the overwhelming, influence, which female Ministers, under the title of Court ladies, had obtained over the destinies of England, France, and Spain. At that momentous period—the commencement of the eighteenth century—the memoirs of a *bed-chamber lady* constitute the history of Europe. The bed-chamber woman soon became the pivot of the

political world. The influence of Mrs. Masham first endangered and finally overthrew the power of the great Duke of Marlborough. Some of the characteristics of the reign of Charles the Second reappeared partially and in a very unattractive form under the two first Georges, and have served to impart a tinge of French colour to the memoirs which describe their Courts. But, fortunately for England, neither Walpole nor his royal master were men of refined taste. It would have been hard for a monarch like Charles the Second, or a minister like Lord Bolingbroke, to resist the charms of those beautiful and sprightly girls who sparkle like diamonds in all the memoirs of that time. Their political influence was but small. George the First and his successor pursued their unwieldy loves and enjoyed their boorish romps in a style not seductive to English gentlemen. Politics were surrendered to Walpole; and the consequence was that, although there was plenty of immorality under those gracious Sovereigns, yet the feminine element of Court life had no longer that connection with *public policy* which once for a brief space it had possessed; and the resemblance to French manners in this respect grew less and less, till it disappeared altogether with the accession of George the Third.

During the reign of that domesticated paterfamilias a slight exception, it is true, occurred in the instance of Georgina Spencer, Duchess of Devonshire. Young, beautiful, amiable, and witty, and not altogether free from coquetry, she reckoned amongst her admirers some of the most distinguished men of that day. She fascinated them all without encouraging the pretensions of any; and notwithstanding the jealousy which so great a superiority necessarily excited among her own sex, and despite the

rancour to which the inutility of their efforts to please her gave birth in the bosoms of certain of the men, she preserved a reputation for discretion beyond all suspicion. One circumstance of her life might indeed have cast a slur upon her fair fame if her irreproachable conduct, added to her natural graces, had not condoned a species of notoriety which opinion in England very generally reproves. The Duchess of Devonshire had friendly relations with the celebrated Charles James Fox, and that friendship had taken the tinge of party spirit. Fox presented himself as a candidate to represent Westminster in Parliament. He had two very formidable opponents, and it was thought that he would have succumbed in the struggle had not several amiable and energetic women made extraordinary efforts to procure him votes. At the head of these fair solicitors was the Duchess of Devonshire. A butcher whose vote she requested promised it to her on the condition that he might give her a kiss. To this she cheerfully consented, and that kiss added one more vote to her friend's poll. Such familiarity was far less shocking to our English manners than the too active and public part taken by a lady of distinction in politics. Very few of her countrywomen before her time had given occasion for a like scandal.*

The existence of those literary assemblies in France during the eighteenth century, the most important of which were

* An anecdote of her has been preserved which proves how very general was the impression the grace and beauty of the Duchess of Devonshire made upon men in every station of society. On one occasion of her being present on the racecourse at Newmarket, a burly farmer who stood near her carriage, after having for some time gazed at her in a species of ecstasy, exclaimed aloud, "Ah! why am I not God Almighty?—she should then be Queen of Heaven!" The Duchess preserved her personal charms far beyond the period of life when they commonly disappear among women, though she lost one of her eyes a few years before her death in 1806.

those, presided over by Madame du Deffand, Mdlle. de Lespinasse, and Madame Geoffrin, were a characteristic feature of the time. It is a notable fact that the abstention from politics in those assemblies indirectly tended to increase the power and importance of the women who frequented them. Alluding to their influence, Montesquieu caustically remarked that a nation where women give the prevailing tone must necessarily be talkative. Then, however, it was the men who talked and the women who listened. The men talked because they could do little else; women gave the prevailing tone because men of all classes were partly compelled, and partly willing, to gather around them. The nobles being excluded from politics—in which none but the Ministers and their creatures could interfere—exercising no control either as individuals or as a body, naturally gave themselves up to the pleasures of society. Their political insignificance thus increased the power and importance of women.

To a far greater degree was their power and importance increased, on the contrary, during the first decade of the French Revolution, when, from the exceptional position they held, the *salons* of Madame Roland, Madame Necker, Madame de Suard, and others were essentially political—that of Madame Roland being almost an echo of the Legislative Assembly. But women who love freedom abstractedly for its own sake, and are ready to suffer and die for a political principle, like Madame Roland, are very rarely met with.

Towards the close of the century the female leaders of the hitherto literary and social *salons* were so irresistibly swept into the whirlpool of public questions and events that they for the most part involuntarily became mere political partisans. Among others, but with a considerable modification on the score of the literary element, may be instanced

Madame de Staël, who by descent, education, and natural bias was inevitably destined to aim at political power. The extent and prominence of that exercised by her must have been considerable, though certainly overrated by Napoleon, in whom, however, it excited such unreasonable apprehension as led him to inflict ten years' banishment from France upon the talented daughter of Necker.

It must not be inferred that we desire to reduce women to the condition of a humiliating inaction. Far from it. In the position we would place them they could never feel, think, or act with greater interest or vivacity. Whilst it is desirable that every kind of artifice or intrigue should be interdicted from the interior of their domesticity, it is quite permissible for them to watch attentively important matters that may be occurring in public life. To that function they may bring their care and their solicitude, in order to follow and second continually the companion of their existence. "Les hommes même," says Fénelon, "qui ont toute l'autorité en public, ne peuvent par leurs délibérations établir aucun bien effectif, si les femmes ne leur aident à l'exécuter." Such was the legitimate influence exercised by the Princess Esterhazy, Ladies Holland, Palmerston, and Beaconsfield, in our day. It is no secret that the late lamented Viscountess Beaconsfield took the deepest interest in every great movement in which her illustrious husband was engaged. Such, too, was the case with Lady Palmerston, in reference to the great statesman whose name she bore. The influence of women in the politics of recent days is something peculiar and new. Our time has seen many women whose share in the politics of men was frank, unconcealed, and legitimate, while yet it never pretended or sought to be anything more than an influence—never attempted to be a ruling spirit.

By following these examples, the women of England may make their power felt, without demanding to be put upon the same footing as their husbands.

Woman's reign, it has been truly said, "is almost absolute within the four walls of a drawing-room." It is undisputed in family direction and in the management of children; but the cases are rare indeed where it extends to *public questions* of any kind. The Frenchwoman of the present day is essentially a woman. Her objects are almost always feminine; she does not seek to go beyond her sphere; she understands her mission as one of duty in her house and of attraction towards the world; she is generally very ignorant of politics and all dry subjects, and shrinks from any active part in their discussion. Of course there are exceptions by the thousand; but the rule is that she voluntarily abstains from interference in outside topics, whatever be their gravity or their importance. She may have a vague opinion on such matters, picked up from hearing men talk around her, but the bent of her nature leads her in other ways—her tendency is towards things which satisfy her as a woman. It naturally follows that men do not give her what she does not seem to want. They consult her on matters of mutual interest, they ask for and often follow her advice in business; but in nine cases out of ten no husband would allow his wife to tell him how to vote at an election, or what form of government to support. This distinction is infinitely more remarkable in France than any analogous condition would be in England, because of the existence there of several rivals to the throne, and the consequent splitting up of the entire nation into adherents of each pretender. Yet even this exceptional position does not induce Frenchwomen to become politicians. Some few of them, of course, are so, and fling themselves

with ardour into the cause they have adopted; but, fortunately for the tranquillity of their homes, the greater part of them have wisdom enough to comprehend that their real functions on the earth are of another kind.

The majority of the champions of the enfranchisement of the sex have loudly protested against the hackneyed truisms, formerly so rife, which impute to women every imaginable form of silliness and frivolity; that they, like Alphonse Karr's typical woman, have nothing to do but "*s'habiller, babiller et se déshabiller.*" But it will be well to remember the existence of another class of maxims of even greater weight, which dwell on the subtle influence of women, and of its illimitable consequences. "If the nose of Cleopatra," remarks the most famous of these aphorists—Pascal—"had been a hair's-breadth longer, the fortunes of the world would have been altered." Has the influence of the sex decreased since the days of the dusky beauty whose irresistible fascinations

"—— lost a world, and bade a hero fly?"

Rather, is it not infinitely more subtle, wider, and more prevailing than ever? No one who recognises the skill with which that immense influence may be exercised can listen without astonishment to the flimsy arguments which are usually advanced in support of the question of the political enfranchisement of the sex. That the results of giving this particular form of ability—a power which is irresistible to the highest intellectual refinement—the political arena for its field have not only proved widely injurious to women who have so exercised it, but to those most closely connected with them, it has been the author's object to show.

"And what hope of permanent success," it has been cogently asked, "could women have if they were to enter

into competition with men in callings considered peculiarly masculine, many of which are already overstocked?" We are also brought here again face to face with that evil—the lessening or the complete loss of womanly grace and purity. Take away that reverential regard which men now feel for them, leave them to win their way by sheer strength of body or mind, and the result is not difficult to conjecture. Let the condition of women in savage life tell. Towards something like this, although in civilised society not so coarsely and roughly exposed to view, matters would tend if these agitators for women's rights were successful. Husbands, brothers, sons, have too keen a sense of what they owe of good to their female relatives to risk its loss; or to exchange the gentleness, purity, and refinement of their homes for boldness, flippancy, hardness and knowledge of evil.

Nature, herself, then, has disqualified women from fighting and from entering into the fierce contentions of the prickly and crooked ways of politics. There is a silent and beautiful education which Heaven intended that all alike should learn from mothers, sisters, and wives. Each home was meant to have in their gentler presence a softening and refining element, so that strength should train itself to be submissive, rudeness should become abashed, and coarse passions held in check by the natural influence of women. High or low, educated or uneducated, there is the proper work of the weaker sex. And, finally, we venture to address her in the words of Lord Lyttelton:—

> "Seek to be good, but aim not to be great;
> A woman's noblest station is retreat;
> Her fairest virtues fly from public sight;
> Domestic worth—that shuns too strong a light."

BOOK I.

PART I.

POLITICAL WOMEN.

CHAPTER I.

ANNE DE BOURBON,

SISTER OF THE GREAT CONDÉ, AFTERWARDS DUCHESS DE LONGUEVILLE.

THE brilliant heroine of the Fronde, of whose grace, beauty, and influence Anne of Austria was so jealous—not to speak of the mortal rivalry of the gay Duchesses de Montbazon and de Châtillon—although the youngest of that famous trio whom Mazarin found so formidable in the arena of politics, obviously claims alike from her exalted rank and the memorable part she played in the tragi-comedy of the Fronde, priority of notice among the bevy of the Cardinal's fair political opponents.

Some time in the month of August, 1619, Anne Geneviève de Bourbon-Condé first saw the light in the donjon of Vincennes, where her parents had been kept State prisoners for three years previously. She was the eldest of the three children of Henry (II.) de Bourbon-Condé, first prince of the blood, and of that Charlotte Marguerite de Montmorency, "the beauty, perfect grace and majesty of her time."* The lovely Montmorency on coming to Court in her fifteenth year had sorely troubled the heart of the amorous soldier-

* Lenet.

king, Henry of Navarre, who had married her in 1609 to his nephew of Condé with the cóvert hope of finding him an accommodating husband; but the latter, alike defiant and uxorious, made the jovial Bearnois plainly understand that he had wedded the blooming Charlotte exclusively for himself. The *gaillard* monarch, however, at length grew so deeply enamoured that the prince, perceiving there was too much cause to fear the result of the constant assiduities of his royal uncle, fled precipitately with his young wife from France, only to return thither after tidings reached him of the great Henry's assassination. To the fair Montmorency's very decided proclivity to gallantry was to be attributed—if we may believe the scandal-loving Tallemant des Reaux—her long confinement, by the Regent Marie de' Medici's consent, within the gloomy fortress of Vincennes, rather than any reason of State for her sharing her husband's imprisonment. In fact, it was believed that the jealous prince procured her incarceration simply to keep her out of harm's way.

Deriving from her mother the threefold gifts of grace, beauty, and majesty, the fair Bourbon inherited also, it must be owned, a share of that princess's inclination to *l'honnête galanterie*. The restriction to a *share* should be noted; for at no period of her heydey, not even during the licence of the Fronde, could Anne Geneviève be accused of having—as Madame de Motteville tells us the Princess de Condé had,—adorers "in every rank and condition of life, from popes, kings, princes, cardinals, dukes, and marshals of France, down to simple gentlemen."

The mind and heart, however, of Anne de Bourbon, although predestined, alas! eventually to culpable passion, seemed at first but little inclined to the gay world—with all

its blandishments and seductions, or even to its innocent pleasures. When quite a child she was in the habit of accompanying her mother in her visits to the convent of the Carmelites at Paris. For though still possessing great personal attractions, Madame de Condé had become serious and of a somewhat demonstrative piety. Those visits, which were frequent, strengthened Anne's gentle and susceptible mind in its tendency to devotion: The impression, too, which somewhat later the tragic fate of her uncle, the unfortunate Duke de Montmorency,* left on her memory, inspired her with the resolution to quit the outer world at the earliest possible moment, and, renouncing all its pomps and grandeurs, hide beneath the veil her budding attractions. Although her mother opposed an inflexible resistance to her embracing that holy vocation, and strove to combat by forcible arguments the cold and disdainful demeanour exhibited by her daughter when mixing in gay society, the fair girl persevered from the age of thirteen to seventeen in her longing to embrace the life of the cloister. Futile for a time were the parental arguments, unfruitful every effort! Anne Geneviève would not consort with worldlings, persisted in her distaste for mundane pleasures, and continued to cherish persistently her desire for conventual seclusion. At length the princess, in 1636, having resolved upon the adoption of more energetic measures, suddenly ordered her daughter to make preparations for appearing at a Court ball, and that, too, in three days. With what despair did the young princess hear the cruel sentence! What affliction, too, befell the Carmelite nuns when they heard of the fatal mandate. What a flood of

* Brought to the scaffold by Richelieu in 1632.

sighs and tears and prayers! The good sisters gathered themselves together to take counsel one with another, and decided that, since Mdlle. de Bourbon could not avoid the wretched fate that awaited her, before going through the trying ordeal she should indue her lovely form with an undergarment of hair-cloth (commonly called a *cilice*), and, protected by such armour of proof, she might then fearlessly submit herself to all the temptations lurking beneath the ensnaring vanities of her Court attire. The *cilice*, however, did not, it seems, prove invulnerable as the ægis of Minerva, for the subtle shafts winged by homage and admiration pierced through that slight breast-plate to a heart which in truth was by nature framed to inspire and welcome both. The Princess de Condé rejoiced greatly at her daughter's conversion to more reasonable views of mundane existence. The commencement of her noviciate was no longer thought of, and her visits to the Carmelites became sufficiently rare. But it was only a deferment of that calm vocation, it being Anne de Bourbon's destiny to embrace it at the close of her feverish political career.

This era of her entrance into the great world was probably the happiest, the most joyous of the fair Bourbon's life. Lofty distinction of birth, great personal beauty, and rare mental fascination, contributed to place her in the very foremost rank of the Court circle—in the "height of company"—conspicuous amongst lovely dames and distinguished men of the time. Her peerless loveliness at once meeting with universal recognition, "la belle Condé" was toasted with acclamation by courtiers, young and old—at Chantilly, at Liancourt, at the Louvre, and at the Hôtel de Rambouillet. Contemporaries of either sex have rendered

unanimous testimony to the varied and exceptional character of her attractions, and we will let a woman's pen add to Petitot's pencilling some of those delicate traits which neither the burin nor even the vivid tints of the enamel have the power to convey.

"Her beauty," says Mdme. de Motteville, "consisted more in the brilliance of her complexion"—("it had the blush of the pearl," writes another contemporary)—"than in perfection of feature. Her eyes were not large, but bright, and finely cut, and of a blue so lovely it resembled that of the turquoise. The poets could only apply the trite comparison of lilies and roses to the carnation which mantled on her cheek, whilst her fair, silken, luxuriant tresses, and the peculiar limpidity of her glance, added to many other charms, made her more like an angel—so far as our imperfect nature allows of our imagining such a being —than a mere woman." Somewhat later, the smallpox, in robbing her of the bloom of her beauty, still left her all its brilliancy, to repeat the remark of that eminent connoisseur of female loveliness, Cardinal de Retz.

To sum up the general opinion of her contemporaries: Mdlle. de Bourbon rather charmed by the very peculiar style of her countenance than by its linear regularity. One of her greatest fascinations lay in an indescribable languor, both of mind and manner—"a languor interrupted at intervals," says De Retz, "by a sort of luminous awakenings, as surprising as they were delightful. This physical and intellectual indolence presented later in life a piquant contrast to her then"—according to Mdme. de Motteville—"somewhat too passionate temperament." She was of good height, and altogether of an admirable form. It is evident also, from the authentic portraits of her still

extant, that she had that kind of attraction so much prized during the seventeenth century, and which, with beautiful hands, had made the reputation of Anne of Austria. In speech, we are told, she was very gentle. Her gestures, with the expression of her countenance, and the sound of her voice, produced the most perfect music. But her peculiar charm consisted in a graceful ease—a languor, as all her contemporaries expressed it — which would quickly change to the highest degree of animation when stirred by emotion, but which usually gave her an air of indolence and aristocratic *nonchalance,* sometimes mistaken for *ennui,* sometimes for disdain.

Crediting the unvarying testimony of these and other of her contemporaries, the daughter of Bourbon-Condé must have been at least as beautiful as her mother—endowed, indeed, with almost every attribute and feature of female loveliness.

"Beauty," remarks a philosophic panegyrist of physical perfection, "extends its prestige to posterity itself, and attaches a charm for centuries to the name alone of the privileged creatures upon whom it has pleased heaven to bestow it." Beauty has also its epochs. It does not belong to all men and to all ages to enjoy it in its exquisite perfection. As there are fashions which spoil it, so there are periods which affect its sentiment. For instance, it belonged to the eighteenth century to invent *pretty* women —charming dolls—all powder, patches, and perfume, affecting the attractions which they did not possess under their vast hoops and great furbelows. Let us venture to say that the foundation of true beauty, as of true virtue, as of true genius, is strength. Shed over this strength the vivifying rays of elegance, grace, delicacy, and you have

beauty. Its perfect type is the Venus of Milo,* or again, that pure and mysterious apparition, goddess or mortal, which is called Psyche, or the Venus of Naples.† Beauty is certainly to be seen in the Venus de' Medici, but in that type we feel that it is declining, or about to decline. Look at, not the women of Titian, but the virgins of Raphael and Leonardo: the face is of infinite delicacy, but the body evinces strength. These forms ought to disgust one for ever with the shadows and monkeys *à la Pompadour*. Let us adore grace, but not separate it in everything too much from strength, for without strength grace soon shares the fate of the flower that is separated from the stem which vitalizes and sustains it.

What a train of accomplished women this seventeenth century presents to us! They were not all politicians. Women who were loaded with admiration, drawing after them all hearts, and spreading from rank to rank that worship of beauty which throughout Europe received the name of French gallantry. In France they accompany this great century in its too rapid course; they mark its principal epochs, beginning with Charlotte de Montmorency and ending with Mdme. de Montespan. The Duchess de Longueville has perhaps the most prominent place in that dazzling gallery of lovely women, having all the characteristics of true beauty, and joining to it a charm exclusively her own.

In early girlhood she had been taken, along with her elder brother, the Duke d'Enghien, to the Hotel de Rambouillet; and the *salons* of the Rue St. Thomas du Louvre

* Quatremère de Quincy, Dissertation upon the Antique Statue of Venus Discovered in the Island of Milo. 1836.

† Millingen: Ancient Inedited Monuments. Fol. 1826.

were probably the most fitting school for such a mind as hers, in which grandeur and finesse were almost equally blended—a grandeur allied to the romantic, and associated with a finesse frequently merging into subtilty, as indeed may be discerned in Corneille himself, the most perfect mental representative of that period.

To follow step by step the course of Anne de Bourbon's life at this period of it through all its earliest rivalries, would involve the task of recording the manifold caprices of a tender, yet ambitious nature, in which the mind and heart were unceasingly dupes of each other. It would be like an attempt to follow the devious path of the light foam and laughing sparkle of the billow—

"In vento et rapida scribere oportet aqua."

Our purpose lies mainly with her political life, but ere entering upon it we will give a short but comprehensive view of her character in the words of one who, more than anybody else, had the means of judging her correctly—La Rochefoucauld. "This Princess," writes the Duke, "possessed all the charms of mind, united to personal beauty, to so high a degree, that it seemed as though nature had taken pleasure in forming in her person a perfectly finished work. But those fine qualities were rendered less brilliant through a blemish rarely seen in one so highly endowed, which was that, far from giving the law to those who had a particular admiration for her, she transfused herself so thoroughly into their sentiments that she no longer recognised her own."

Now La Rochefoucauld should have been the last person to complain of that defect, since he was the first to foster it in the Duchess. In her bosom love awoke ambition, but

the awakening was so sudden, in fact, that any difference in the two passions was never perceptible.

Singular contradiction! The more we contemplate the political bias of Madame de Longueville the more it becomes mingled with her amorous caprice; but when we analyse her love more narrowly (and later on in life she herself made the avowal), it appears nothing else than ambition travestied—a desire to shine only the more magnificently brilliant.

Her character, then, was entirely wanting in consistency, in self-will; and her mind, be it observed, however brilliant and acute, had nothing that was calculated to counterbalance that defect of character. One may possess the faculty of right perception without strength of mind to do that which is right. One may be rational in mind and the contrary in conduct—character being at fault between the two. But here the case was different. Madame de Longueville's mind was not, above all else, rational; it was acute, prompt, subtle, witty by turns, and readily responsive to the varying humour of the moment. It shone voluntarily in contradiction and subterfuge, ere exhausting itself finally in scruples. There was much of the Hôtel de Rambouillet in such a mind as hers.

"The mind in the majority of women serves rather to confirm their folly than their reason." So says the author of the "Maxims;" and Madame de Longueville, with all her metamorphoses, was undoubtedly present before him when he penned the sentence. For she, the most feminine of her sex, would offer to him the completest epitome of all the rest. In short, evidently as he has made his observations upon her, she also seems to have drawn her conclusions from him. So the agreement is perfect.

CHAPTER II.

MADAME DE LONGUEVILLE.

A YOUNG Princess of the Blood so lovely, fascinating, and witty as Anne de Bourbon, was surely destined, it might be thought, to contract an early and altogether suitable matrimonial alliance. It was therefore somewhat surprising to find how much difficulty there was in mating her. Foremost among those who sought her hand was that hair-brained, handsome, coarse-mannered Duke de Beaufort, younger son of Cæsar de Vendôme, himself the bastard of the jovial Bearnois by the *Fair Gabrielle.** Beaufort inherited his unfortunate grand-dame's beauty — had a Phœbus-Apollo style of head, set off with a profusion of long, curly, golden locks; was a young, brave, and flourishing gallant, and somewhat later (during the Fronde), from his blunt speech and familiar manners with the Parisian mob, became the idol of the market-women, and was therefore dubbed *Roi des Halles*. But this scapegrace suitor withdrew his pretensions in order to gratify, it is said, the handsome though decried Duchess de Montbazon, who had enthralled him in her flowery chains as a led-captain. On entering her nineteenth year Mdlle. de Bourbon was promised in marriage to the Prince de Joinville, son of Charles of Lorraine (Duke de Guise), but that young nobleman having died prematurely in Italy, no other serious matrimonial project seems to have been entertained until the Princess had reached her twenty-third year.

* Created Duchess de Beaufort by Henry IV.

The fortunate suitor was one of Beaufort's rivals—or, rather, colleagues—for that would be the more correct term when designating their mutual relations to the unscrupulous Duchess de Montbazon. The widower, Henry of Orleans (Duke de Longueville), by birth, dignity, and wealth was looked upon as the first match in France. Unfortunately, in his case, those dazzling attributes were materially abated through disparity of age, for he had reached the ripe maturity of forty-seven, whilst the bride of his choice had not yet seen half that cycle of summers. To be twenty-four years her senior was, for the husband of a youthful princess so excelling in wit and beauty, certainly a formidable inequality, and so Mdlle. de Bourbon seems to have thought. At the command, however, of her father, who intimated that his determination was inflexible in thus disposing of his daughter's hand, Anne Geneviève meekly complied, and was espoused in June, 1642, to Henri de Bourbon, Duke de Longueville.*

The young Duchess found herself speedily surrounded by a swarm of courtiers, attracted by her sprightly and refined intelligence, her majestic beauty, her nonchalant and languishing grace. What more adorable mistress could an audacious aspirant dream of? Bold adventurers for such a lady's love there was no lack of; and would not many be encouraged with the thought that such a prize could only be defended by a husband already verging towards the decline of life, and whose heart, moreover, was believed to be in the keeping of another? The sighs of the suitors, however, all adventurous and calculating as they might be, were wasted, their hopes altogether fallacious. For six long

* The Duke was descended from the "brave Dunois," bastard of Orleans.

years there was nothing more accorded to that crowd of often-renewed adorers save the smiles of an innocent coquetry. He who, during that period of honest gallantry, coming near to La Rochefoucauld, seems to have made the liveliest impression, was Coligny; and it was only slanderers who whispered that the young Count was happier than became the adorer of a heroine of the De Rambouillet school.

Madame de Longueville, nevertheless, possessed the characteristics of her sex; she had alike its lovable qualities and its well-known imperfections. In a sphere where gallantry was the order of the day, that young and fascinating creature, married to a man already in the decline of life, and, moreover, with his affections engaged elsewhere, merely followed the universal example. Tender by nature, the senses, she herself says in her confessions—the humblest ever made—played no minor part in the affairs of the heart. But, surrounded unceasingly by homage, she found pleasure in receiving it. Very lovable, she centred her happiness in being loved. Sister of the Great Condé, she was not insensible to the idea of playing a part which should occupy public attention; but, far from pretending to domination, there was so much of the woman in her that she allowed herself to be led by him whom she loved. Whilst, around her, interest and ambition assumed so frequently the hues of love, she listened to the dictates of her heart alone, and devoted herself to the interest and ambition of another. All contemporary writers are unanimous on that point. Her enemies sharply reproach her alike for not having a fitting object in her political intrigues, and for being unmindful of her own interests. But they appear not to be aware that, in thinking to overwhelm her memory by such accusation, they

rather elevate it, and they are assiduous to cover her faults and misconduct—faults which, after all, are centred in one alone. In short, some writers cast the greater part of the blame the young Duchess's conduct merits upon her husband, who, according to them, knew not how to make amends for his own disadvantage, on the score of disparity of age, by an anxious and indulgent tenderness.

Before their marriage was solemnised it was stipulated that the Duke de Longueville should break off his *liaison* with the Duchess de Montbazon—then notorious as one of the most unrestrained among the women of fashion at the Court of the Regent. This, however, the Duke unhappily failed to do.

In declaring its adhesion to Mazarin at the commencement of the Regency, the House of Condé had drawn upon itself the hatred of the party of the *Importants*, though that enmity scarcely rebounded upon Madame de Longueville. Her amiableness in everything where her heart was not seriously concerned, her perfect indifference to politics at this period of her life, together with the graces of her mind and person, rendered her universally popular, and shielded her against the injustice of partisan malice. But outside the pale of politics she had an enemy, and a formidable one, in the Duchess de Montbazon. That bold and dangerous woman having by her fascinations enslaved Beaufort, the quondam admirer of Madame de Longueville, the young Duke through her intrigues became a favourite chief of the *Importants*. Amongst the earliest to swell the ranks of that faction were two other personages who had played a very conspicuous part during the reign of Louis XIII. The first of these, Madame de Montbazon's step-daughter, was the witty, beautiful, and errant Duchess de Chevreuse, whom

Louis had judged so dangerous that he had expressly forbidden by his will, when on the point of death, that she should ever be recalled from exile to Court. By the same prohibition was affected the former Keeper of the Seals, the Marquis de Châteauneuf, who had displayed considerable talent under Richelieu, but had ultimately made himself obnoxious to that great Minister, after having given many a sanguinary proof of his devotion to him. A glance at the antecedents of that remarkable woman, Madame de Chevreuse, the early favourite of Anne of Austria, will now be necessary in order to understand clearly her relative position to the Queen and Mazarin at the commencement of the Regency, as well as to those incipient *Frondeurs,* the *Importants,* at the moment of her dragging the Prince de Marsillac (afterwards Duke de Rochefoucald) into that party.

CHAPTER III.

THE DUCHESS DE CHEVREUSE.

From the long-sustained, vigorous, and very eminent part played by Marie de Rohan in opposing the repressive system of the two great Cardinal Ministers, her name belongs equally to the political history as to that of the society and manners of the first half of the sixteenth century.

She came of that old and illustrious race the issue of the first princes of Brittany, and was the daughter of Hercule de Rohan, Duke de Montbazon, a zealous servant of Henry IV., by his first wife Madeleine de Lenoncourt, sister of Urbain de Laval, Marshal de Bois-Dauphin. Born in December, 1600, she lost her mother at a very early age, and in 1617 was married to that audacious favourite of Louis XIII., De Luynes, who from the humble office of "bird-catcher" to the young King, rose to the proud dignity of Constable of France, and who, upon the faith of a king's capricious friendship, dared to undertake the reversal of the Queen-mother, Marie de' Medici's authority; hurl to destruction her great favourite, the Marshal d'Ancre; combat simultaneously princes and Protestants, and commence against Richelieu the system of Richelieu. Early becoming a widow, Marie next, in 1622, entered the house of Lorraine by espousing Claude, Duke de Chevreuse, one of the sons of Henry de Guise, great Chamberlain of France, whose highest merit was the name he bore, accompanied by good looks and that bravery which

was never wanting to a prince of Lorraine; otherwise disorderly in the conduct of his affairs, of not very edifying manner of life, which may go far to explain and extenuate the errors of his young wife. The new Duchess de Chevreuse had been appointed during the sway of her first husband, *surintendante* (controller) of the Queen's household, and soon became as great a favourite of Anne of Austria as the Constable de Luynes was of Louis *the Just.* The French Court was then very brilliant, and gallantry the order of the day. Marie de Rohan was naturally vivacious and dashing, and, yielding herself up to the seductions of youth and pleasure, she had lovers, and her adorers drew her into politics. Her beauty and captivating manners were such as to fascinate and enthral the least impressible who crossed her path, and their dangerous power was extensively employed in influencing the politics of Europe, and consequently had a large share in framing her own destiny. A portrait in the possession of the late Duke de Luynes* represents her as having an admirable figure, a charming expression of countenance, large and well-opened blue eyes, chesnut-tinted fair hair in great abundance, a well-formed neck, with the loveliest bust possible, and throughout her entire person a piquant blending of delicacy, grace, vivacity, and passion. The following summary of her character by the clever, caustic, but little scrupulous De Retz, graphic as it is, and based on a certain amount of truth, must not be unhesitatingly accepted, it being over-coloured by wilful exaggeration :—"I have never seen anyone else," says he, "in whom vivacity so far

* This nobleman died at Rome in December, 1867, at the age of sixty-five, having gone thither to aid the Pope against the Garibaldians.

usurped the place of judgment. It very often inspired her with such brilliant sallies that they flashed like lightning, and so sensible withal, that they might not have been disowned by the greatest men of any age. The manifestation of this faculty was not confined to particular occasions. Had she lived in times when politics were non-existent, she would not have rested content with the idea only that they ought to have been rife. If the Prior of the Carthusians had pleased her, she would have become a sincere recluse. M. de Luynes initiated her into politics, the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Holland corresponded with her upon them, and Châteauneuf amused her with them. She gave herself up to their pursuit because she abandoned herself, without reserve, to everything which pleased the individual whom she loved, and simply because it was indispensable that she should love somebody. It was not even difficult to give her a lover by setting an eligible suitor to pay her court with an ostensible political motive; but as soon as she accepted him, she loved him solely and faithfully, and she owned to Mdme. de Rhodes and myself that, through caprice, she said, she had never really loved those whom she esteemed the most, with the exception of the unfortunate George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. Devotion to the passion which in her might be called eternal, although she might change the object of it, did not prevent even a fly from causing her mental abstraction; but she always recovered from it with a renewed exuberance which made such phases rather agreeable than otherwise. No one ever took less heed about danger, and never woman had more contempt for scruples and duties: she never recognised other than that of pleasing her lover."

This epigrammatic sketch is almost worthy of the exag-

gerated author of the *Historiettes*,* and the reader is advised to accept only its more salient and truthful traits—the keen and accurate glance of Mdme. de Chevreuse in scanning the prevailing aspect of the political horizon, her dauntless courage, the fidelity and devotion of her love. Retz, moreover, mistakes entirely the order of her adventures; he forgets and then invents. In striving after epigrammatic point, he sacrifices truth to smartness of style, and writes as though he looked upon events in which the passions of the Duchess made her take part as mere trifles, whereas among them there were some than which none were ever of graver or even more tragic moment.

Mdme. de Chevreuse, in fact, possessed almost all the qualities befitting a great politician. One alone was wanting, and precisely that without which all the others tended to her ruin. She failed to select for pursuit a legitimate object, or rather she did not choose one for herself, but left it to another to choose for her. Mdme. de Chevreuse was womanly in the highest possible degree; that quality was alike her strength and her weakness. Her secret mainspring was love, or rather gallantry,† and the interest of him whom she loved became her paramount object. It is this which explains the wonderful sagacity, finesse, and energy she displayed in the vain pursuit of a chimerical aim, which ever receded before her, and seemed to draw her on by the very prestige of difficulty and danger. La Rochefoucauld accuses her of having brought misfortune upon all those whom she loved;‡ it is equally the truth to add that all those whom she loved hurried her in the sequel into

* Tallement des Réaux.

† Mdme. de Motteville.

‡ Mémoires, Petitot's Collection, 2nd series, vol. li. p. 339.

insensate enterprises. It was not she evidently who made of Buckingham a species of paladin without genius; a brilliant adventurer of Charles IV. of Lorraine; of Chalais a hair-brained blunderer, rash enough to commit himself in a conspiracy against Richelieu, on the faith of the faithless Duke d'Orleans; of Châteauneuf, an ambitious statesman, impatient of holding second rank in the Government, without being capable of taking the first. Let no one imagine that he is acquainted with Mdme. de Chevreuse from having merely studied the foregoing portrait traced by De Retz, for that sketch is an exaggeration and over-charged like all those from the same pen, and was destined to amuse the malignant curiosity of Mdme. de Caumartin—for without being altogether false, it is of a severity pushed to the verge of injustice. Was it becoming, one might ask, of the restless and licentious Coadjutor to constitute himself the remorseless censor of a woman whose errors he shared? Did he not deceive himself as much and for a far longer period than she? Did he show more address in political strategy or courage in the dangerous strife, more intrepidity and constancy in defeat? But Mdme. de Chevreuse has not written memoirs in that free-and-easy and piquant style the constant aim of which is self-elevation, obtained at the expense of everybody else. There are two judges of her character the testimony of whose acts must be held to be above suspicion—Richelieu and Mazarin. Richelieu did all in his power to win her over, and not being able to succeed, he treated her as an enemy worthy of himself.

To revert briefly to her long-continued struggle with Richelieu, it must not be forgotten that for twenty years she had been the personal friend and favourite of Anne of Austria, and for ten years she had suffered persecution and

privation on that account. Exiled, proscribed, and threatened with imprisonment, she had narrowly escaped Richelieu's grasp by disguising herself in male attire, and in that garb traversing France and Spain on horseback, had succeeded in eluding his pursuit, and after many adventures in safely reaching Madrid. Philip IV. not only heaped every kind of honour upon his sister's courageous favourite, but even, it is said, swelled the number of her conquests. Whilst in the Spanish capital she had allied herself politically with the Minister Olivarez, and obtained great ascendancy over the Cabinet of Madrid. The war between France and Spain necessarily rendering her position in the latter country delicate and embarrassing, she had, early in 1638, sought refuge in England. Charles I. and Henrietta Maria gave her the warmest possible reception at St. James's; and the latter, on seeing again the distinguished countrywoman who had some years back conducted her as a bride from Paris to the English shores to the arms of Prince Charles, embraced her warmly, entered into all her troubles, and both the English King and Queen wrote letters pleading in her behalf, to Louis XIII., Anne of Austria, and Richelieu with regard to the restoration of her property and permission to rejoin her children at Dampierre. She herself resumed the links of a negotiation with the Cardinal which had never been entirely broken off, and the success of which seemed quite practicable, since it was almost equally desired by both. That negotiation was being carried on for more than a year, and when link after link had been frequently snapped and re-soldered, only to be once more broken, Richelieu at length gave his solemn word that she might return with perfect safety to Dampierre.

On the eve of her departure from the English Court,

a vessel being in readiness to convey her to Dieppe, where a carriage awaited her landing, the Duchess received an anonymous letter warning her that certain ruin awaited her if she set foot on the soil of France, followed by another, still more explicit with regard to Richelieu's designs to effect her destruction, from no less a person than Charles of Lorraine. This second warning from so reliable a source, followed shortly afterwards by other advice—held by her in the light of a command—enchained her to a foreign land. She for whom during ten long years the Duchess had suffered all things, braved all things, her august friend Anne of Austria cautioned her not to trust to appearances. Thus vanished the last hope of a sincere reconciliation between two persons who knew each other too well to discard distrust and to confide in words, of which neither were sparing, without requiring solemn guarantees that they could not or would not give.

Choosing stoically, therefore, to still undergo the pangs of absence, to consume the noontide of the days of her attractive womanhood in privation and turmoil rather than risk her liberty, Mdme. de Chevreuse on her part did not remain idle. From the moment she felt convinced that Richelieu was deceiving her, attracting her back to France only to hold her in a state of dependence, and if need were, to incarcerate her—having broken with him, she considered herself as free from all scruple, and thought of nothing further than paying him back blow for blow. Her old duel with the Cardinal thus once more renewed, she formed in London, with the aid of the Duke de Vendôme, La Vieuville, and La Valette, a faction of active and adroit emigrants, who, leaning on the Earl of Holland, then one of the chiefs of the Royalist party and a general in the army

of Charles of England; upon Lord Montagu, an ardent Papist and intimate adviser of Queen Henrietta Maria; upon Digby and other men of influence at Court, maintained likewise the closest intelligence with the Court of Rome through its envoy in England, Rosetti, and especially with the Cabinet of Madrid; encouraging and kindling the hopes of all the proscribed and discontented, strewing obstacles at all points in the path of Richelieu, and accumulating formidable perils around his head.

On the breaking out of the Civil War in England, Mdme. de Chevreuse repaired to Brussels, where in 1641 we find her acting as the connecting link between England, Spain, and Lorraine. Without attributing to the Duchess any especial motive beyond seconding an enterprise directed against the common enemy, she did not the less play an important part in the affair of the Count de Soissons—the most formidable conspiracy that had hitherto been hatched against Richelieu. Anne of Austria was certainly privy to the plot and lent it her aid. She might have been ignorant of the secret treaty with Spain; but for all the rest, and so far as it menaced the Cardinal, she had a perfect understanding with the conspirators. That high-handed Minister, by overstraining the springs of government, by prolonging the war, by increasing the public expenditure, and by oppressing all classes whilst he crushed some in particular, had excited a hatred so bitter and widespread that at length he governed the State almost entirely through terror. Whilst the grandeur of his designs commanded respect and veneration from a select few, his genius towered above the bulk of his countrymen. But that harsh rule, continuing unrelaxed, and so many sacrifices being perpetually renewed, at length wearied out the greater number, the King himself not

excepted. Louis's reigning favourite, the Grand-Écuyer, Cinq Mars, undermined and blackened the Cardinal as much as possible in his royal master's estimation. He knew of the conspiracy of the Count de Soissons, and without taking a share in it, he favoured it. He might therefore be reckoned upon to figure in the next. The Queen, still in disgrace in spite of the two heirs she had given to the crown, naturally breathed vows for the termination of a rule which so oppressed her. Gaston, the King's brother, had pledged his word, however little the reliance that might be placed upon it; but the Duke de Bouillon, an experienced soldier and an eminent politician, had openly declared himself; and his stronghold of Sedan, situated on the frontiers of France and Belgium, offered an asylum whence could be braved for a long while all the power of the Cardinal. A widespread understanding had been established throughout every part of the kingdom, amongst the clergy, and in the Parliament. There were conspirators in the very Bastille itself, where Marshal de Vitry and the Count de Cramail, prisoners as they were, had prepared a *coup de main* with an admirably-kept secrecy. The Abbé de Retz, then twenty-five, preluded his adventurous career by this attempt at civil war. The Duke de Guise, having effected his escape from Rheims, and taken refuge in the Low Countries, was about to share the dangers of the conspiracy at Sedan. But the greatest—the firmest—hope of the Count de Soissons rested upon Spain: that power alone could enable him to take the field from Sedan, to march upon Paris, and crush the power of Richelieu. He therefore despatched Alexandre de Campion, one of his bravest and most intelligent gentlemen, to Brussels to negotiate with the Spanish Ministers and obtain from them troops and money. There he

addressed himself to Mdme. de Chevreuse, and confided to her the mission with which he was charged, which she hastened to second with all her influence. Having prevailed upon Olivarez to strenuously support those requirements which the Count de Soissons and the Duke de Bouillon sought at his hands, she despatched letters by a secret agent in the service of Spain to the Duke de Lorraine, entreating him not to fail her in this supreme opportunity of repairing her past misfortunes and of dealing a mortal blow to their remorseless enemy. The Duke Charles, thus solicited at once by Mdme. de Chevreuse, by his kinsman the Duke de Guise, by the Spanish Minister, and, more than all, by his own restless and adventurous ambition, broke the solemn compact he had so recently made with France, entered into an alliance with Spain and the Count de Soissons, and prepared with all diligence to march to the aid of Sedan. And whilst Mdme. de Chevreuse and the emigrants brought into play every engine they could lay hands on, Lamboy and Metternich set out for Flanders at the head of six thousand Imperialists. France—all the nationalities of Europe, were on the tiptoe of expectation. Richelieu had never been menaced with a greater danger, and the loss of the battle of Marfée would have proved a fatal event had not the Count de Soissons met his death simultaneously with his triumph.

If Mdme. de Chevreuse were a stranger in 1642 to the fresh conspiracy of Gaston, Duke d'Orleans, Cinq Mars, and the Duke de Bouillon against her relentless foe, it would have been the only one in which she had not taken a leading part. It is indeed more than probable that she was in the secret as well as Queen Anne, whose understanding with Gaston and Cinq Mars cannot be contested. La Rochefou-

could repeatedly remarks touching a matter in which he seems to have been implicated, "The dazzling reputation of M. le Grand (Cinq Mars) rekindled the hopes of the discontented; the Queen and the Duke d'Orleans united with him; the Duke de Bouillon and several persons of quality did the same." De Bouillon also declares that the Queen was closely allied with Gaston and the Grand-Écuyer, and that she herself had invited his concurrence. "The Queen, whom the Cardinal had persecuted in such a variety of ways, did not doubt that, if the King should chance to die, that minister would seek to deprive her of her children, in order to assume the Regency himself. She secretly instigated De Thou to seek the Duke de Bouillon with persevering entreaties. She asked the latter whether, in the event of the King's death, he would promise to receive her and her two children in his stronghold of Sedan, believing—so firmly persuaded was she of the evil designs of the Cardinal, and of his power—that there was no other place of safety for them throughout the realm of France." De Thou further told the Duke de Bouillon that since the King's illness the Queen and the Duke d'Orleans were very closely allied, and that it was through Cinq Mars that their alliance had been brought about. Now, where the Queen was so deeply implicated it was not likely that Mdme. de Chevreuse would stand aloof. A friend of Richelieu, whose name has not come down to us, but who must have been perfectly well informed, does not hesitate to place Mdme. de Chevreuse as well as the Queen amongst those who then endeavoured to overthrow Richelieu. "M. le Grand," he writes to the Cardinal,* "has been urged to his wicked designs by the

* Archives des Affaires Étrangères; FRANCE, tom. CI.

Queen-mother, by her daughter (Henrietta Maria), by the Queen of France, by Mdme. de Chevreuse, by Montagu, and other English Papists." At length the Cardinal, on an early day in June, 1642, retired to Tarascon, ostensibly for the sake of his health, but doubtless for safety also, accompanied by his two bosom friends, Mazarin and Chavigny, and the faithful regiments of his guards. Finding himself surrounded by peril on all sides, and representing to Louis XIII. the gravity of the situation, he cited that which had been alleged of Mdme. de Chevreuse as amongst the most striking indications of the truth of what he stated.*

But what *was* the party in fact then conspiring against Richelieu? Was it not the party of former coalitions—of the League, of Austria, and of Spain? And Mdme. Chevreuse at Brussels, through her connection with the Duke de Lorraine, the Queen of England, the Chevalier de Jars at Rome, the Minister Olivarez at Madrid—was she not one of the great motive powers of that party? When, therefore, such machinery was found to be again in activity, it was quite reasonable to suspect the hand of Mdme. de Chevreuse in all its movements.

The gathering cloud that now lowered so thick and threatening above the head of Richelieu seemed pregnant with inevitable destruction to his power and life. But ere long his eagle glance pierced through the overshadowing gloom, and the aim of Cinq Mars' dark intrigue became clearly revealed to his far-seeing introspection. A treachery, the secret of which has remained impenetrable to every research made during the last two centuries, caused the

* Archives des Affaires Étrangères; FRANCE, tom. cii. Inedited Memoir of Richelieu.

treaty concluded with Spain through the intervention of Fontrailles, and bearing the signatures of Gaston, Cinq Mars, and the Duke de Bouillon, to fall into his hands. From that instant the Cardinal felt certain of victory. He knew Louis XIII. thoroughly; he conjectured that he might in some access of his morbid and changeful humour have uttered reproachful words against his Minister in the favourite's ear—even expressed a wish to be rid of him, as did our first Plantagenet when tired of the despotism of Thomas à Becket—and had perhaps listened to strange proposals for effecting such object. But the Cardinal knew right well also to what extent Louis was a king and a Frenchman, and devoted by self-interest to their common system. He despatched, therefore, Chavigny in all haste from Narbonne with irrefragable evidence of the treaty made with Spain. Louis, thunderstricken, could scarcely believe his own eyes. He sank into a gloomy reverie, out of which he emerged only to give way to bursts of indignation against the favourite who could thus abuse his confidence and conspire with the foreigner. It was needless to inflame his anger, he was the first to call for an exemplary punishment. Not for a day, not for an hour, did his heart soften towards the youthful culprit who had been so dear to him. He thought only of his crime, and signed without an instant's hesitation his death-warrant. If Louis the Just spared the Duke de Bouillon, it was merely to acquire Sedan. If he pardoned his brother Gaston, he at the same time dishonoured him by depriving him of all authority in the State. Upon a report spread by a servant of Fontrailles, and which Fontrailles' memoirs fully confirm, his suspicions were directed towards the Queen; and no one afterwards could divest his mind of the conviction that in this instance,

as in the affair of Chalais, Anne of Austria had an understanding with his brother, the Duke d'Orleans. What would he have done had he perused the statement of Fontrailles, the Duke de Bouillon's memoirs, a letter of Turenne, and the declaration of La Rochefoucauld? Their united testimony is so concordant that it is altogether irresistible. The Queen racked her brains to exorcise this fresh storm, and to persuade the King and Richelieu of her innocence. Anne went much farther; she did not confine herself to falsehood and dissimulation. Menaced by imminent danger, she went so far as to repudiate that courageous friend who had been so long and steadfastly devoted to her. Had fortune declared in her favour she would have embraced the Duchess as a deliverer. Vanquished and disarmed, she abandoned her. As she had protested in terms of horror against the conspiracy that had failed, her two young, imprudent, and ill-starred accomplices, Cinq Mars and De Thou, mounted the scaffold without breathing her name. Finding also both the King and Richelieu violently exasperated against Mdme. de Chevreuse, and firmly resolved to reject the renewed entreaties of her family to obtain her recall, Anne of Austria, far from interceding for her faithful adherent, warmly sided with her enemies; and further, to indicate the change in her own sentiments, and seem to applaud that which she could not prevent, she asked as an especial favour that the Duchess might be estranged from her person, and even from France. "The Queen," wrote Chavigny, Richelieu's Minister for Foreign Affairs, "has pointedly asked me if it were true that Mdme. de Chevreuse would return; and, without waiting for a reply, she signified to me that she should be vexed to find her presently in France; that she now saw the Duchess

in her proper light; and she commanded me to pray His Eminence on her part, if he had any mind to favour Mdme. de Chevreuse, that it might be done without granting her permission to return to France. I assured her Majesty that she should have satisfaction on that point." *

Poor Marie de Rohan! Her heart already bled from many wounds, but this last was the "unkindest cut of all." Her position had indeed become frightful, and calculated to sink her to the lowest depth of despair. No hope of seeing her native land again, her princely château, her children, her favourite daughter Charlotte! Deriving scarcely anything from France, deeply in debt, and with credit exhausted, she found herself entirely at the end of her resources. How thoroughly did the banished woman then realise the woes of exile—how hard it is to climb and descend the stranger's stair, experience the hollowness of his promise, and the arrogance of his commiseration. And, finally, as though fated to drain her cup of bitterness to the last drop, to learn that she, her long-loved bosom friend and royal mistress, who owed her, at the very least, a silent fidelity, had openly ranged herself on the side of fortune and Richelieu!

In a condition of mental torture the most acute, resulting from such accumulated misfortune, Madame de Chevreuse remained for several months with no other support than that of her innate high-souled courage. At length, towards the close of that eventful year, the golden grooves of change rung out a joyous pæan to gladden the heart of the much-enduring exile. Suddenly Marie—all Europe—heard with a throb that the inscrutable, iron-handed man of all the human race most dreaded alike by States as by individuals,

* Archives des Affaires Étrangères, FRANCE, tom. CI.

had yielded to a stronger power than his own, and had closed his eyes in death (December 4, 1642). Within a few short months afterwards the King also, whose regal power he had consolidated at such a cost in blood and suffering, followed the great statesman to the tomb; having entrusted the Regency, very much against his will, to the Queen, but controlled by a Council, over which presided as Prime Minister the man most devoted to Richelieu's system—his closest friend, confidant, and creature—Jules Mazarin.

A passage in the funeral oration on Louis XIII. summed up briefly but significantly the result of Richelieu's gigantic efforts to consolidate the regal power. "Sixty-three kings," it said, "had preceded him in rule of the realm, but he alone had rendered it absolute, and what all collectively had been impotent to achieve in the course of twelve centuries for the grandeur of France, he had accomplished in the short space of thirty-three years." It was against that absolute power incarnate in Richelieu, which from the steps of the throne hurled men to the earth with its bolts rather than governed them, that Mazarin was destined later to encounter the reaction of the Fronde.

Distrustful of leaving Anne of Austria in uncontrolled possession of regal authority, Louis by his last will and testament had placed royalty, including his brother Gaston as lieutenant-general of the realm, in a manner under a commission. And further, Louis did not believe that he could ensure quiet to the State after his death without confirming and perpetuating, so far as in him lay, the perpetual exile of Madame de Chevreuse.

As the pupil and confidential friend of Richelieu, Mazarin had imbibed both that statesman's and the late king's opinions and sentiments touching the influence of that

eminently dangerous woman. Though he had never seen her hitherto, he was not the less well acquainted with her by repute: dreading her mortally, and cherishing a like antipathy to her friend Châteauneuf. He knew the Duchess to be as seductive as she was talented, experienced and courageous in party strife—an instance of which was that she could sway entirely a man of such ambition and capacity as the former Keeper of the Seals. Attached, moreover, in secret to Lorraine, to Austria, and to Spain, all this was as absolutely incompatible with the exclusive favour to which he aspired at the hands of his royal mistress as it was with all his diplomatic and military designs. The solemn injunctions of the late king's will, while denouncing Madame de Chevreuse and Châteauneuf as the two most illustrious victims of the close of his reign, embodied also the heads of the policy which it was that monarch's wish should be continued by Richelieu's successor. "Forasmuch," ran the will, "that for weighty reasons, important to the welfare of our State, we found ourselves compelled to deprive the Sieur de Châteauneuf of the post of Keeper of the Seals of France, and have him sent to the Castle of Angoulême, in which he has remained by our command up to the present time, we will and intend that the said Sieur de Châteauneuf remain in the same state in which he is at present, in the said Castle of Angoulêsme, until after the peace be concluded and executed; under charge, nevertheless, that he shall not then be set at liberty save by the order of the Queen-Regent, under the advice of her Council, which shall appoint a place to which he shall retire, within the realm or without the realm, as may be judged best. And as our design is to take foresight of all such subjects as may possibly in some way

or other disturb the precautionary arrangements which we have made to preserve the repose and safety of our realm, the knowledge that we have of the bad conduct of the Lady Duchess de Chevreuse, of the artifices which she has employed up to this moment without the kingdom with our enemies, made us judge it fitting to forbid her, as we do, entrance into our kingdom during the war: desiring even that after the peace be concluded and executed she may not return into our kingdom, save only under the orders of the said Lady Queen-Regent, with the advice of the said Council, under charge, nevertheless, that she shall not either take up her abode or be in any place near to the Court or to the said Queen-Regent."

Within a few days only after the decease of Louis XIII. that same Parliament which had enrolled his will reformed it. The Queen-Regent was freed from every fetter and restriction, and invested with almost absolute sovereignty; the ban was removed from the proscribed couple so solemnly denounced, Châteauneuf's prison doors were thrown open, and Madame de Chevreuse quitted Brussels triumphantly, with a cortége of twenty carriages, filled with lords and ladies of the highest rank in that Court, to return once more to France and to the side of her royal friend and mistress.

CHAPTER IV.

RETURN OF MADAME DE CHEVREUSE TO COURT.

AFTER ten years' absence from the scene of her former triumphs, social and political, did the brilliant Duchess then once more find herself safe and free in France. The *Gazette de Renaudot*—the *Moniteur* of that day—recording the return of Madame de Chevreuse, on the 14th of June, 1643, remarks * :—"During such long exile, this princess has manifested what an elevated mind like hers can do, in spite of all those vicissitudes of fortune which her constancy has surmounted. The Duchess went to pay homage to their Majesties, during which visit she received so many tokens of affection from the Queen-Regent, and gave her in return such proofs of her zeal in everything relating to her service, and so much resignation to her will, that it indeed appears that length of time, distance, or thorny asperities can only prevail over common minds. Hence the great train of visitors from this Court to her daily, and for which her spacious hotel scarcely affords room, does not excite so much wonder as the fact which has been the subject of remark, that the fatigue consequent upon long journeys and the rigour of adverse fortune have worked no change in her magnanimity, nor—which is the more extraordinary—in her beauty."

* No. lxxvii. p. 579.

Making due allowance for the inflated diction of the complaisant Court newswriter, let us endeavour to approach somewhat nearer to the truth.

Madame de Chevreuse had then entered upon her forty-third year. Though still surprisingly well-preserved, her beauty, tried by adversity, was visibly on the decline. The inclination to gallantry still existed, but subdued, politics having gained the supremacy. She had formed the acquaintance of, and held political relations with, the most celebrated statesmen in Europe. She had figured at almost all its Courts, the strength and weakness of its several Governments were known to her, and in her wanderings, having seen "men and cities," she had acquired a large experience. The tried favourite hoped to find Anne of Austria the same as she had left her—averse to business, and very willing to allow herself to be led by those for whom she had a particular affection; and as Madame de Chevreuse had been in her youthful days paramount in the Queen's affection, she fully expected to exercise over her that twofold ascendancy which love and capacity would jointly give. More ambitious for her friends than for herself, she saw them already rewarded for their long sacrifices, replacing everywhere the creatures of Richelieu, and at their head, in the highest post, as first minister, him who for her sake had broken with the triumphant Cardinal, and had endured an imprisonment of ten tedious years. She did not care much about Mazarin, with whom she had no acquaintance, whom she had never seen, and who appeared to her unsupported either by the Court or the French nation, whilst she felt herself sustained by all that was illustrious, powerful, and accredited therein. She believed that she could make sure of the Duke d'Orleans through

his wife, the beautiful Margaret, sister of Charles of Lorraine. She could dispose almost at will of the Houses of Rohan and Lorraine, particularly of the Duke de Guise and the Duke d'Elbeuf, like herself just returned from Flanders. She reckoned upon the Vendômes, upon the Duke d'Epernon, upon La Vieuville, her old companions in exile in England; upon the ill-treated Bouillons, upon La Rochefoucauld, whose disposition and pretensions were so well known to her; upon Lord Montagu, who had been her slave, and at that moment possessed the entire confidence of Anne of Austria; upon La Châtre, the friend of the Vendômes, and Colonel-General of the Swiss Guards; upon Treville, upon Beringhen, upon Jars, upon La Porte, who were all emerging from exile, prison, and disgrace. Among the women, her young stepmother and her sister-in-law seemed secure—Madame de Montbazon and Madame de Guéméné, the two greatest beauties of the time, who drew after them a numerous crowd of old and young adorers. She knew also that among the first acts of the Regent had been the recall to her side of the two noble victims of Richelieu—Madame de Senécé and Madame de Hautefort, whose virtue and piety had conspired so beneficially with other influences, and had given them an inestimable weight in the household of Anne of Austria. All those calculations seemed accurate, all those hopes well-founded; and Madame de Chevreuse left Brussels firmly persuaded that she was about to re-enter the Louvre as a conqueress. She deceived herself: the Queen was already changed, or very nearly so.

To show due honour to her former favourite, however, Anne of Austria despatched La Rochefoucauld to greet and escort her homewards; but before he set out she charged

him to inform the Duchess of the altered disposition in which she would find her royal mistress. During that audience Rochefoucauld did his utmost to reinstate his charming friend and close ally in the Queen's good graces. "I spoke to her," says he, "with more freedom perhaps than was becoming. I set before her Madame de Chevreuse's fidelity, her long-continued services, and the severity of the misfortunes which they had entailed upon her. I entreated her to consider of what fickleness she would be thought capable, and what interpretation might be placed upon such inconsiderateness if she should prefer Cardinal Mazarin to Madame de Chevreuse. Our conversation was long and stormy, and I saw clearly that I had exasperated her." He then started to meet the Duchess on the road from Brussels, and found her at Roye, whither Montagu had already preceded him. Montagu had travelled to Roye to place Mazarin's homage at the feet of Madame de Chevreuse, with the view of bringing about at any cost an union and identity of policy between the old and the new favourite. He was no longer the gay and sprightly Walter Montagu, the friend of Holland and Buckingham, the enamoured knight ever ready to break a lance against all comers for a glance of the bright eyes of Madame de Chevreuse. Time had changed him as well as others: he had become a bigot and a devotee, and already contemplated taking orders in the Church of Rome. He still remained, however, attached to the object of his former adoration, but above all he belonged to the Queen, and consequently resigned to Mazarin. La Rochefoucauld—ever ready to ascribe to himself the chief share in any undertaking in which he figured, as well as the character of a great politician—asserts that he entreated Madame de

Chevreuse not to attempt at first to govern the Queen, but to endeavour solely to regain in Anne's mind and heart that place of which it had been sought to deprive her, and to put herself in a position in which she would be able to protect or ruin the Cardinal, according to conduct or circumstances emanating from himself.

The Duchess listened attentively to the advice of both her old friends, promised to follow it, and did so in fact, but in her own peculiar way, and in that of the interest of the party she had so long served, and which she would not abandon. As Anne of Austria seemed much pleased at seeing the noble wanderer again, and gave her a warm reception, Marie did not perceive any difference in the Queen's sentiments, and flattered herself that by constant assiduousness she would ere long resume that sway over the Regent's mind she had formerly exercised.

Operating against this not unreasonable expectation of Madame de Chevreuse, Mazarin had a silent but potent ally in the newly-awakened inclination of Anne for repose and a tranquil life. The first draughts of almost supreme power tasted by the long-oppressed Queen were not yet embittered by faction and anarchy. In bygone days, insult, neglect, and persecution had stirred her at intervals into mental activity, and urged her upon dangerous courses; but now, having obtained all she aimed at, happy, and beginning to form attachments, she entertained a dread of troublesome adventures and hazardous enterprises. She therefore feared Madame de Chevreuse quite as much as she loved her. The astute Cardinal anxiously strove to foster such distrust. He looked for support from the Princess de Condé, then high in the Queen's favour, both through her own merit as well as that of the Prince her

husband, but more than all through the brilliant exploits of her son, the Duke d'Enghien; through the services also of her son-in-law the Duke de Longueville, who had, with honourable distinction, commanded the armies of Italy and Germany, and by her recently-married daughter, Madame de Longueville, already the darling of the *salons* and the Court. The Princess, like Queen Anne, had in the heyday of her beauty been fond of homage and gallantry, but had now grown serious, and displayed a somewhat lively piety. She held Madame de Chevreuse in aversion, and detested Châteauneuf, who, in 1632, at Toulouse, had presided at the trial and condemnation of her brother, Henri de Montmorency. She therefore had striven, in concert with Mazarin, to destroy or at least weaken Madame de Chevreuse's hold upon the Queen. Armed with the last will of Louis XIII., they had made it appear something like a fault in the Queen's eyes to disregard it so soon and so entirely. They had given her to understand that former days and associations could never return; that the amusements and passions of early youth were but "evil accompaniments" * of a later period of life; that now she was before all things a mother and a Queen; that Madame de Chevreuse, dissipated and carried away by passion, and cherishing the same inclination for gallantry and idle vanity as hitherto, was no longer worthy of her confidence; that she had brought good fortune to no one; and that in lavishing wealth and honour upon the Duchess the debt of gratitude she owed her would be sufficiently discharged.

* Madame de Motteville, tom. i. p. 162.—"Mauvais accompagnements."

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA'S PRIME MINISTER AND HIS POLICY.

And now what was the actual position of Mazarin on succeeding to power in 1643?

Richelieu had died admired and abhorred. The people, glad to be delivered from so heavy a yoke, obeyed with joy the incipient rule of the Queen-Regent. The courtiers were at first enchanted with a Government that refused nothing asked of it. It appeared, as one of the number said, that there were no more than five little words in the French language: *La reine est si bonne!*"* The State prisons threw open their gates; the rights of parliaments were respected; the princes of the blood and the great nobles were restored to their governorships. There was for a season one unanimous concert of praise and thanksgiving. But when the princes and parliaments were desirous, as before Richelieu's rule, of participating in the general direction of the State, and especially in the distribution of place and patronage, great was the surprise of both at finding a steady resistance on the part of the Queen-Regent. To see her manifest a disposition to govern without them was looked upon as something scandalous. Every attempt she made thenceforward to retain a power which

* De Retz Memoirs, Petitot Collection.

they evaded, or to repossess herself of that which she had imprudently suffered to escape from her grasp, seemed to them nothing less than a continuation of the odious system of Richelieu. Their exasperation was increased to the highest degree, therefore, when they beheld her give her entire confidence to a foreigner, to a Cardinal, to a creature of Richelieu. By that triple title Mazarin was equally hateful to the great nobles, the members of parliament, and the middle class. The tyranny of Richelieu had in the end attained to something noble by the high-handed heedlessness of all his acts. If the people were to be trampled on, it was a species of consolation that their oppressor was feared by others as well as themselves. But that the oppression of the doomed French nation was to be continued by a more ignoble hand was altogether intolerable. Frenchmen had begun to ask one another, who *was* this Mazarin who had come to rule over them? He could not —like Richelieu—boast of his high birth, of descent from a long line of noble ancestors—Frenchmen. Poets and romancers, ye whose imaginations delight to dwell upon sudden downfalls and rapid rises, mark well that little lad at play upon the Sicilian shore near the town of Mazzara! Springing from the lowest of the plebeian class, his family have not even a surname. He is the son of one Pierre, a fisherman, whose humble hut stands yonder beneath the cliff. But a day will come when that lowly-born lad, joining his baptismal name to that of the town which sheltered his cradle, will become Jules de Mazarin, robed in the Roman purple, quartering his shield with the consular fasces of Julius Cæsar, governing France, and through her preparing and influencing the destinies of entire Europe.

It was not, however, by easy steps that Richelieu's

disciple and successor obtained a firm grasp of that plenary power which the master mind of the former had consolidated and long wielded so grandly and terribly. The Queen herself at the commencement of the Regency had not yet renounced her former friendships. During a considerable portion of her married life Anne had impatiently endured the slights and disparagements to which she was so long subjected, both by her husband and his Minister. Through engaging in divers dangerous and unsuccessful enterprises, she had been deprived of all influence, and was a queen only in name. But, a woman and a Spaniard, she had descended to dissimulation, and in that "ugly but necessary virtue"* made rapid progress. Up to the time of Richelieu's death she had played a double game—made partisans in secret, with the object of subverting the Cardinal's power, whilst feigning the semblance of friendship towards him, and did not scruple to humiliate herself on occasions, in order to carry her point! After that great man's decease, through rare patience, great caution, and a persistent line of conduct, she ultimately attained that for which she had been willing to make any and every sacrifice—the Regency. During the King's last illness, the mistrusted Queen and wife had profited by Mazarin's unhoped-for service, as Prime Minister, in prevailing over the unwillingness of the dying King to appoint her custodian of his son, and Regent during his minority. She regarded this, therefore, as a first and most important service on the part of Mazarin towards her, and for which she felt proportionately grateful. Such was the Cardinal's first stepping-stone to the good graces of Anne of Austria, and his twofold talent both as a laborious and indefatigable statesman and a consummate courtier, speedily

* Madame de Motteville.

helped to secure for him her entire confidence. The singular personal resemblance he bore to that desperate *enamorado* of her early womanhood, the brilliant Buckingham, may probably also have served him as a favourable prestige. On her accession to power Anne did not manifest much firmness of character. Naturally indolent, she disliked the drudgery attendant upon business details, and hence continued through convenience the services of a man who, by taking off her hands the wearisome routine of State affairs, allowed her to reign at her ease.

Mazarin, moreover, had never been displeasing to her. He had begun to ingratiate himself during the month preceding the death of Louis XIII.,* and she named him Prime Minister about the middle of May—partly through personal liking, but more through political necessity. Far from appearing to resemble the impassive and imperious Richelieu, Anne perhaps might have recalled with agreeable emotion the words of her deceased consort when he first presented Mazarin to her (in 1639 or 1640)—"He will please you, madame, because he bears a striking resemblance to Buckingham." By degrees the liking increased, and grew sufficiently strong to resist every assault from his enemies. At the same time the Minister to whom the Queen owed so much, instead of dictating to and presuming to govern her, was ever at her feet, and prodigal of that attention, respect, and tenderness to which she had been hitherto a stranger.

It is a delicate matter to investigate with exactitude the means by which Mazarin obtained entire sway over the Queen-Regent, and one which La Rochefoucauld scarcely touches upon; but it is too interesting a point in history to be left in the dark, and thereby to altogether disregard that

* Louis died May 14th, 1643.

which first constituted the minister's strength, and soon afterwards became the centre and key of the situation. After a long season of oppression, regal powers and splendour gilded the hours of Anne of Austria, and her Spanish pride exacted the tribute of respect and homage. Mazarin was prodigal of both. He cast himself at her feet in order to reach her heart. In her heart of hearts she was not the less touched by the grave accusation brought against him that he was a foreigner, for was not she also a foreigner? Perhaps that of itself proved the source of a mysterious attraction to her, and she may have found it a singular pleasure to converse with her Prime Minister in her mother tongue as a compatriot and friend. To all this must be added the mind and manners of Mazarin—supple and insinuating, always master of himself, of an unchangeable serenity amidst the gravest circumstances, full of confidence in his good star, and diffusing that confidence around him. It must also be remembered that Cardinal although he was, Mazarin was not a priest; that imbued with the maxims which formed the code of gallantry of her native land, Anne of Austria had always loved to please the other sex; that she was then forty-one and still beautiful, that her Prime Minister was of the same age, that he was exceedingly well-made and of a most pleasing countenance, in which *finesse* was blended with a certain air of greatness. He had readily recognised that without ancestry, establishment, or support in France, and surrounded by rivals and enemies, all his strength centred in the Queen. He applied himself therefore above all things to gain her heart, as Richelieu had tried before him; and as he happily possessed far other means for attaining success in that respect, the handsome and gentle-mannered Cardinal eventually succeeded. Once master of her heart, he easily

directed the mind of Anne of Austria, and taught her the difficult art of pursuing ever the same end by the aid of conduct the most diverse, according to the difference of circumstances.

But favourable and indeed gracious as his royal mistress had shown herself towards him personally, and apart from any particular line of policy, at the outset of his premiership Mazarin had nevertheless to contend against a formidable host of enemies; and not the least redoubtable among them might be reckoned that intrepid political heroine the lately-banished Duchess de Chevreuse. No sooner did she again find herself at the side of Anne of Austria than the indefatigable Marie set to work with all her characteristic dash, spirit, and energy to attack Richelieu's system and its adherents, now directed by Mazarin.

The first point she sought to carry was the return of Châteauneuf to office. "The good sense and long experience of M. de Châteauneuf," says La Rochefoucauld, "were known to the Queen. He had undergone a rigorous imprisonment for his adhesion to her cause; he was firm, decisive, loved the State, and more capable than anyone else of re-establishing the old form of government which Richelieu had first begun to destroy. Firmly attached to Mdme. de Chevreuse, she knew sufficiently-well how to govern him. She therefore urged his return with much warmth." Châteauneuf had already obtained as a royal boon that the "rude and miserable condition" of close incarceration under which he had groaned for ten years should be changed for a compulsory residence at one of his country houses. Mdme. de Chevreuse demanded the termination of this mitigated exile, that she might once more behold him free who had endured such extremities for the Queen's sake and her own.

Mazarin saw that he must yield, but only did so tardily, never appearing himself to repulse Châteauneuf, but always alleging the paramount necessity of conciliating the Condé family, and especially the Princess, who, as already said, bore bitter enmity towards him as the judge of her brother, Henri de Montmorency. Châteauneuf was therefore recalled, but with that reservation accorded to the last clause of the King's will, that he should not appear at Court, but reside at his own house of Montrouge, near Paris, where his friends might visit him.

The next step was to transfer him thence to some ministerial office. Châteauneuf was no longer a young man, but neither his energy nor his ambition had deserted him, and Mdme. de Chevreuse made it a point of honour to reinstate him in the post of Keeper of the Seals, which he had formerly held and lost through her, and which all Queen Anne's old friends now saw with indignation occupied by one of the most detested of Richelieu's creatures, Pierre Séguier. This last, however, was a man of capacity—laborious, well-informed and full of resources. To these qualifications he added a remarkable suppleness, which made him very useful and accommodating to a Prime Minister. He moreover had the support of friends who stood high in the Queen's favour, and was further strengthened by the opposition of the Condés and the Bishop of Beauvais to Châteauneuf. The Duchess perceiving that it was almost impossible to surmount so powerful an opposition, took another way of arriving at the same end. She contented herself with asking for the lowest seat in the cabinet for her friend; well knowing that once installed therein, Châteauneuf would soon manage all the rest and aggrandise his position.

At the same time that she strove to extricate from disgrace the man upon whom rested all her political hopes, Madame de Chevreuse, not daring to attack Mazarin overtly, insensibly undermined the ground beneath his feet, and step by step prepared his ruin. Her experienced eye enabled her promptly to perceive the most favourable point of attack whence to assail the Queen, and the watchword she passed was to fan and keep alive to the utmost the general feeling of reprobation which all the proscribed, on returning to France, had aroused and disseminated against the memory of Richelieu. This feeling was universal—among the great families he had decimated or despoiled;—in the Church, too firmly repressed not to be unmindful of its abasement;—in the Parliament, strictly confined to its judicial functions, and aspiring to break through such narrow limits. The same feeling was still alive in the Queen's bosom, who could not have forgotten the deep humiliation to which Richelieu had subjected her, and the fate for which he had probably reserved her. These tactics succeeded, and on every side there arose against the late violence and tyranny, and, by a rebound, against the creatures of Richelieu, a storm so furious that Mazarin's utmost ability was taxed to allay it.

Madame de Chevreuse likewise supplicated Anne of Austria to repair the long-endured misfortunes of the Vendôme princes, by bestowing upon them either the Admiralty, to which an immense power was attached, or the government of Brittany, which the head of the family, Cæsar de Vendôme, had formerly held—deriving it alike from the hand of his father, Henry IV., and as the heritage of his father-in-law, the Duke de Mercœur. This was nothing less than demanding the aggrandisement of an unfriendly house,

and at the same time the ruin of two families that had served Richelieu with the utmost devotion, and were best capable of supporting Mazarin. The Minister parried the blow aimed at him by the Duchess by dint of address and patience, never refusing, always eluding, and summoning to his aid his grand ally, as he termed it—Time. Before the return of Madame de Chevreuse he had found himself forced to win over the Vendômes, and to secure them in his interest. On Richelieu's death he had strenuously contributed to obtain their recall, and had since made them every kind of advance; but he soon perceived that he could not satisfy them without bringing about his own destruction. The Duke Cæsar de Vendôme, son of Henry IV. and *The Fair Gabrielle*, had early carried his pretensions to a great height, and had shown himself restless and factious as a legitimate prince. He had passed his life in revolts and conspiracies, and in 1641 had been compelled to flee to England through suspicion of being implicated in an attempt to assassinate Richelieu. He did not dare return to France until after the Cardinal's death; and, as may well be imagined, he came back breathing the direst vengeance. Against the ambition of the Vendômes Mazarin skilfully opposed that of the Condés, who were inimical to the aggrandisement of a house too nearly rivalling their own. But it was very difficult to retain Brittany in the hands of its newly-appointed governor, the Marshal La Meilleraie, in face of the claim of a son of Henry the Great, who had formerly held it, and demanded it back as a sort of heirloom. Mazarin therefore resigned himself to the sacrifice of La Meilleraie, but he lightened it as much as possible. He persuaded the Queen to assume to herself the government of Brittany, and have only a lieutenant-

genèral over it—a post, of course, beneath the dignity of the Vendômes, and which would, therefore, remain in La Meilleraie's hands. The latter could not take offence at being second in power therein to the Queen; and to arrange everything to the entire satisfaction of a person of such importance, Mazarin solicited for him soon afterwards the title of duke, which the deceased King had, in fact, promised the Marshal, and the reversion of the post of Grand Master of the Artillery for his son—that same son on whom subsequently Mazarin bestowed, with his own name, the hand of his niece, the beautiful Hortense.

Mazarin was so much the less inclined to favour the house of Vendôme from having encountered a dangerous rival in the Queen's good graces, in Vendôme's youngest son, Beaufort, a young, bold, and flourishing gallant, who displayed ostentatiously all the exterior signs of loyalty and chivalry, and affected for Anne of Austria a passionate devotion not likely to be displeasing. "He was tall, well-made, dexterous, and indefatigable in all warlike exercises," says La Rochefoucauld, "but artificial withal, and wanting in truthfulness of character. Mentally he was heavy and badly cultivated; nevertheless he attained his objects cleverly enough through the blunt coarseness of his manners. He was of high but unsteady courage, and was not a little envious and malignant." * De Retz does not, like La Rochefoucauld, accuse Beaufort of artificiality, but represents him as presumptuous and of thorough incapacity. His portrait of him, though over-coloured, like most others from the coadjutor's pen, is sufficiently faithful, but at the commencement of the Regency, the defects of the Duke de Beaufort had not fully declared themselves, and were less

* La Rochefoucauld.

conspicuous than his good qualities. Some few days before her husband's death, Anne of Austria had placed her children under his charge—a mark of confidence that so elated him that the young Duke conceived hopes which his impetuosity hindered him from sufficiently disguising. Indeed, these were presumed upon so far as to give offence to the Queen; and, as the height of inconsistency, he committed at the same time the egregious folly of publicly enacting the led-captain in the rosy chains of the handsome but decried Duchess de Montbazon. It was only, however, by slow degrees that the Queen's liking for him abated. At first, she had proposed to confer upon him the post of Grand-Écuyer, vacant since the death of the unfortunate Cinq-Mars, which would have kept him in close attendance upon her, and was altogether a fitting appointment—for Beaufort had nothing of the statesman in him; with little intellect and no reticence, he was also averse to steady application to business, and capable only of some bold and violent course of action. The Duke had the folly to refuse this post of Grand-Écuyer, hoping for a better; and then, altering his mind when it was too late, he solicited it only to incur disappointment.* The more his favour diminished, the more his irritation increased, and it was not long ere he placed himself at the head of the Cardinal's bitterest enemies.

Madame de Chevreuse hoped to be more fortunate in securing the governorship of Havre for a very different sort of person—for a man of tried devotedness and of a

* Mazarin himself has furnished this fact, otherwise unknown, in one of his diaries (*Carnet*, pp. 72, 73). The Cardinal-Minister was in the habit of jotting down the chief events of each day in these small memorandum books (*Carnets*), which he kept in the pocket of his cassock.

rare and subtle intellect—La Rochefoucauld. She would thereby recompense the services rendered to the Queen and herself, strengthen and aggrandize one of the chiefs of the *Importants*, and weaken Mazarin by depriving of an important government a person upon whom he had entire reliance—Richelieu's niece, the Duchess d'Aiguillon. The Cardinal succeeded in rendering this manœuvre abortive, without appearing to have any hand in it. And herein, as in many other matters, the art of Mazarin was to wear the semblance of merely confirming the Queen in the resolves with which he inspired her.

In thus attributing these various designs, this connected and consistent line of conduct, to Madame de Chevreuse, we do not advance it as our own opinion, but as that of La Rochefoucauld, who must have been perfectly well informed. He attributes it to her both in his own affairs and in those of the Vendômes. Neither was Mazarin blind to the fact, for more than once in his private notes we read these words:—"My greatest enemies are the Vendômes and Madame de Chevreuse, who urges them on." He tells us also that she had formed the project of marrying her charming daughter Charlotte, then sixteen, to the Vendôme's eldest son, the Duke de Mercœur, whilst his brother Beaufort should espouse the wealthy Mademoiselle d'Epernon, who foiled these designs, and even greater still, by throwing herself at four-and-twenty into a convent of Carmelites. These marriages, which would have reconciled, united, and strengthened so many great houses, moderately attached to the Queen and her minister, terrified Richelieu's successor. He therefore sought to foil them by every means in his power, and succeeded in prevailing upon the Queen to frustrate them in an underhand way;

having found that the union of Mademoiselle de Vendôme with the brilliant but restless Duke de Nemours had caused him more than ordinary anxiety.

If the intricate details of those counter intrigues of Mazarin and Madame de Chevreuse be followed attentively, we are at a loss to say to which of the two antagonists the palm for skill, sagacity, and address should be given. Whilst Mazarin was astute enough to make a certain amount of sacrifice in order to reserve to himself the right of not making greater—treating everyone with apparent consideration, rendering no one desperate, promising much, holding back the least possible *proprio motu* of himself, and surrounding Madame de Chevreuse herself with attention and homage without suffering any illusion to beguile him as to the nature of her sentiments—she, on her part, paid him back in the same coin. La Rochefoucauld says that during these *mollia tempora*, Madame de Chevreuse and Mazarin actually flirted with each other. The Duchess, who had always intermingled gallantry with politics, tried, as it appears, the power of her charms upon the Cardinal. The latter, on his side, failed not to lavish honeyed words, and "essayoit même quelque fois de lui faire croire qu'elle lui donnoit de l'amour." * There were other ladies also, it seems, who would not have been sorry to please the handsome First Minister a little. Amongst these might be numbered the Princess de Guéméné,† one of the greatest beauties of the French Court, who, certainly, if only one half the stories related of her be true, was by no means of a ferocious disposition in affairs of gallantry. This lady,

* La Rochefoucauld, Memoirs, p. 383.

† Anne de Rohan, wife of M. de Guéméné, eldest son of the Duke de Montbazon, and brother of Madame de Chevreuse.

as well as her husband, were both favourable to Mazarin, in spite of all the efforts of Madame de Montbazon, and Madame de Chevreuse, her sister-in-law. It may be readily imagined that Mazarin devoted great attention to Madame de Guéméné, and did not fail to pay her a host of compliments, as he did to Madame de Chevreuse; but as he went no further, the two gay ladies were at a loss to conceive what so many compliments coupled with so much reserve meant. They sometimes asked which of the two was really the object of his admiration; and as he still made no further advances at the same time that he continued his gallant protestations, "these ladies," says Mazarin, "si esamina la mia vita e si conclude che io sia impotente." *

Political intrigue had become such an affair of fashion among the Court dames of that day, that those of the highest rank made no scruple of bringing into play all the artillery of their wit and beauty whenever they could contribute to the success of their enterprises. Still endowed with those two potent gifts to an eminent degree, Madame de Chevreuse brought all her various influences into perfect combination, and had grown so passionately fond of the fierce excitement of conspiring, that love was to her now merely a means and political victory the end. She devoted literally her entire existence to it, living in the confidence and intimacy of the Vendômes and other noble perturbators of the hour. Her activity, her penetration, her energy obtained for her among the party of the *Importants* the importance she coveted. It was not long, therefore, ere she begun to give Mazarin cause for grave anxiety. During the encounters resulting from this strenuous antagonism, reconciliations occasionally took place, in which even the Cardi-

* Carnet, iii. p. 39.

nal's coldness, caution, and his laborious occupation, could not, it is said, place him beyond reach of the Duchess's irresistible fascinations. But the latter, well aware that the *rôle* of Mazarin's mistress would not give to her grasp the helm of the State, which he reserved exclusively to himself, preferred, therefore, rather to remain his enemy, and figure at the head and front of the faction antagonistic to his government.

This flirting and skirmishing had gone on for some time, but at last natural feeling prevailed over political reticence. Madame de Chevreuse grew impatient at obtaining words only, and scarcely anything serious or effective. She had, it is true, received some money for her own use, either in repayment of that which she had formerly lent the Queen, or for the discharge of debts contracted during exile and in the interest of Anne of Austria. On returning to Court, one of her earliest steps was to withdraw her friend and *protégé*, Alexandre de Campion, from the service of the Vendômes, and place him in a suitable position in the Queen's household. Châteauneuf had been reinstated in his former post of Chancellor (*des Ordres du Roi*), and later his governorship of Touraine was restored to him on the death of the Marquis de Gèvres, who fell at the siege of Thionville; but the Duchess considered that that was doing very little for a man of Châteauneuf's merit—for him who had staked fortune and life, and undergone ten years' imprisonment. She readily perceived, therefore, that the perpetual delay of favours ever promised, ever deferred in the instances of the Vendômes and La Rochefoucauld, were so many artifices of the Cardinal, and that she was his dupe. This conviction put the spirited partisan upon her mettle. She began to titter, to mock, and to expostulate by turns, and sometimes

twitted the minister in pert and derisive terms. This, however, betrayed a want of her ordinary precaution, and only served to fill Mazarin's quiver with shafts to be used against herself. He made the Queen believe that Madame de Chevreuse sought to rule her with a rod of iron; that she had changed her mask, but not her character; that she was ever the same impulsive and restless person, who, with all her talent and devotedness, had never worked aught but mischief around her, and was only instrumental in ruining others as well as herself. By degrees, underhand and hidden as it might be, war between the Duchess and the Cardinal declared itself unmistakably. The commencement and progress of this curious struggle for supremacy has been admirably depicted by La Rochefoucauld; and, while the autograph memoranda of Mazarin cast a fresh flood of light upon it, they enhance infinitely Madame de Chevreuse's ability by revealing to what an extent that Minister dreaded her.

In every page of these invaluable *carnets* he indicates her as being the head and mainspring of the *Importants*. "It is Madame de Chevreuse," he writes repeatedly, "who stirs them all up. She endeavours to strengthen the hands of the Vendômes; she tries to win over every member of the house of Lorraine; she has already gained the Duke de Guise, and through him she strives to carry away from me the Duke d'Elbeuf." "She sees clearly through everything; she has guessed very accurately that it is I who have secretly persuaded the Queen to hinder the restoration of the government of Brittany to the Duke de Vendôme. She has said so to her father, the Duke de Montbazon, and to Montagu. She has quarrelled with Montagu, in fact, because he raises an obstacle to Châteauneuf by supporting Séguier."

"Nothing discourages Madame de Chevreuse; she entreats the Vendômes to have patience, and sustains them by promising a speedy change of scene." "Madame de Chevreuse never relinquishes the hope of displacing me. The reason she gives for this is, that when the Queen refused to put Châteauneuf at the head of the government, she stated that she could not do it immediately, as she must have some consideration for me, whence Madame de Chevreuse concludes that the Queen has much esteem and liking for Châteauneuf, and that when I shall be no longer where I am, the post is secured for her friend. Hence the hopes and illusions with which they are buoyed up." "The Duchess and her friends assert that the Queen will shortly send for Châteauneuf; and by so doing they abuse the minds of all, and prompt those who are looking to their future interests to pay court to her and seek her friendship. They make an excuse for the Queen's delay in giving him my place, by saying that she has still need of me for some short time." "I am told that Madame de Chevreuse secretly directs Madame de Vendôme (a pious person who has great influence over the bishops and convents), and gives her instructions, in order that she may not fall into error, and that all the machinery used against me may thoroughly answer its purpose." From this last entry it is clear that Madame de Chevreuse, without being in the smallest degree possible a *dévote*, knew right well how to make use of the *parti dévot*, which then exercised great influence over Anne of Austria's mind, and gave serious uneasiness to Mazarin.

The Prime Minister's chief difficulty was to make Queen Anne—the sister of the King of Spain, and herself of a piety thoroughly Spanish—understand that it was necessary, notwithstanding the engagements which she had so often

contracted, notwithstanding the instances of the Court of Rome and those of the heads of the episcopate, to continue the alliance with the Protestants of Germany and Holland, and to persist in only consenting to a *general* peace in which the allies of France should equally find their account as well as that country itself. On the other side, it was continually dinned into the Queen's ear that it was practicable to make a separate treaty of peace, and negotiate singly with Spain on very fitting conditions, that by such means the scandal of an impious war between "the very Christian" and "the very Catholic" King would cease, and a relief be afforded to France very much needed. Such was the policy of the Queen's old friends. It was at least specious, and reckoned numerous partisans among men the most intelligent and attached to the interests of their country. Mazarin, the disciple and successor of Richelieu, had higher views, but which it was not easy at first to make Anne of Austria comprehend. By degrees, however, he succeeded, thanks to his judicious efforts, renewed incessantly and with infinite art; thanks especially to the victories of the Duke d'Enghien—for in all worldly affairs success is a very eloquent and right persuasive advocate. The Queen, however, remained for a considerable interval undecided, and it may be seen by Mazarin's own memoranda that during the latter part of May, as well as through the whole of June and July, the Cardinal's greatest effort was to induce the Regent not to abandon her allies, but to firmly carry on the war. Madame de Chevreuse, with Châteauneuf, defended the old party policy, and strove to bring over Anne of Austria to it. "Madame de Chevreuse," wrote Mazarin, "causes the Queen to be told from all quarters that I do not wish for peace, that I hold the same maxims as Cardinal Richelieu on the point—that

it is both easy and necessary to make a separate treaty of peace." On several occasions he made indignant protestation against such arrangement, pointing out the danger with which it was fraught, and that it would render ineffectual those sacrifices which France had for so many years made. "Madame de Chevreuse," he exclaimed, "would ruin France!" He knew well that, intimately associated with Gaston, her old accomplice in all the plots framed against Richelieu, she had won him over to the idea of a separate peace by holding out the hope of a marriage between his daughter Mademoiselle de Montpensier and the Arch-duke, which would have brought him the government of the Low Countries. He knew that she had preserved all her influence with the Duke de Lorraine; he knew, in fine, that she boasted of having the power of promptly negotiating a peace through the mediation of the Queen of Spain, who was at her disposal. Thus informed, he entreated his royal mistress to reject all Madame de Chevreuse's propositions, and to tell her plainly that she would not listen to anything relating to a separate treaty, that she was decided upon not separating herself from her allies, that she desired a general peace, that with such view she had sent her ministers to Munster, who were then negotiating that important matter, and that it was superfluous to speak to her any more upon the subject.

Though baffled on these different points, Madame de Chevreuse did not consider herself vanquished. She rallied and emboldened her adherents by her lofty spirit and firm resolution. The party feud went on—intrigues were multiplied—but up to the close of August, 1643, no change had taken place, though the acrimony of party feeling had become largely increased. Finding that she had fruitlessly

employed insinuation, flattery, artifice, and every species of Court manœuvre, her daring mind did not shrink from the idea of having recourse to other means of success. She kept up a brisk agitation amongst the bishops and devotees, she continued to weave her political plots with the chiefs of the *Importants*, and at the same time she formed a closer intimacy with that small cabal which formed in some sort the advance-guard of that party, composed of men reared amongst the old conspiracies, accustomed to and always ready for *coups de main*, who had of old embarked in more than one desperate enterprise against Richelieu, and who, in an extremity, might be likewise launched against Mazarin. The memoirs of the time, and especially those of De Retz and La Rochefoucauld, make us sufficiently well acquainted with their names and characters. The former mistress of Chalais found little difficulty in acquiring sole sway over a faction composed of second-rate talents. She caressed it skilfully; and, with the art of an experienced conspirator, she fomented every germ of false honour, of quintessential devotedness, and extravagant rashness. Mazarin, who, like Richelieu, had an admirable police, forewarned of Madame de Chevreuse's machinations, fully comprehended the danger with which he was menaced. No one could have been better informed as to his exact position than the Cardinal: and the plans of the Duchess and the chiefs of the *Importants* developed themselves clearly under Mazarin's sharp-sightedness—either by their incessant and elaborately-concerted intrigues with the Queen, to force her to abandon a minister to whose policy she had not yet openly declared her adhesion, or, should it prove necessary, treat that minister as De Luynes had done the last Queen-mother's favourite d'Ancre, and as Montrésor, Barrière, and Saint-Ybar would

have served Richelieu. The first plan not having succeeded, they began to think seriously about carrying out the second, and Madame de Chevreuse, the strongest mind of the party, proposed with some show of reason to act before the return of the young hero of Rocroy, the Duke d'Enghien; for that victorious soldier once in Paris would unquestionably shield Mazarin. It became necessary, therefore, to profit by his absence in order to strike a decisive blow. Success seemed certain, and even easy. They were sure of having the people with them, who, exhausted by a long war and groaning under taxation, would naturally welcome with delight the hope of peace and repose. They might reckon on the declared support of the parliament, burning to recover that importance in the State of which it had been deprived by Richelieu, and which was then a matter of dispute with Mazarin. They had all the secret, even overt sympathy of the episcopate, which, with Rome, detested the Protestant alliance, and demanded the restoration of that of Spain. The eager concurrence of the aristocracy could not be doubted for a moment; which ever regretted its old and turbulent independence, and whose most illustrious representatives, the Vendômes, the Guises, the Bouillons, and the La Rochefoucaulds were strenously opposed to the domination of a foreign favourite, without fortune, of no birth, and as yet without fame. The princes of the blood resigned themselves to Mazarin rather than to liking him. The Duke d'Orleans was not remarkable for great fidelity to his friends, and the politic Prince de Condé looked twice ere he quarrelled with the successful. He coaxed all parties, whilst he clung to his own interests. His son, doubtless, would follow in his father's footsteps, and he would be won over by being overwhelmed with honours. The day follow-

ing that on which the blow should be struck there would be no resistance to their ascendancy, and on the very day itself scarcely any obstacle. The Italian regiments of Mazarin were with the army; there were scarcely any other troops in Paris save the regiments of the guards, the colonels of which were nearly all devoted to the *Importants*. The Queen herself had not yet renounced her former friendships. Her prudent reserve even was wrongly interpreted. As it was her desire to appease and deal gently on all hands, she gave kind words to everybody, and those kind words were taken as tacit encouragement. Anne had not hitherto shown much firmness of character; a certain amount of liking for the Cardinal was not unjustly imputed to her, and undue significance already attributed to the steadily increasing attachment of a few short months.

Mazarin, on his own part, indulged in no illusions. He was decidedly not yet master of Anne of Austria's heart; since at that moment—that is to say, during the month of July, 1643—in his most secret notes he displays a deep inquietude and despondency. The dissimulation of which everybody accused the Queen obviously terrified him, and we see him passing through all the alternations of hope and fear. It is very curious to trace and follow out the varied fluctuations of his mind. In his official letters to ambassadors and generals he affects a security which he does not feel. With his own intimate friends he permits some hint of his perplexities to escape him, but in his private memoranda they are all laid bare. We therein read his inmost carks and cares, and his passionate entreaties that the Queen-Regent would open her mind to him. He feigns the utmost disinterestedness towards her; he simply asks to make way for Châteauneuf, if she has any secret preference

for that minister. The ambiguous conduct of the Regent harasses and distresses him, and he conjures her either to permit him to retire or to declare herself in favour of his policy.

This exciting contest continued with the keenest activity, but no change had occurred up to the end of July, and even the first days of August, 1643, though this critical state of affairs had become greatly aggravated. The violence of the *Importants* increased daily; the Queen defended her minister, but she also showed consideration for his enemies. She hesitated to take the decided attitude which Mazarin required at her hands, not only in his individual interest, but in that of his government. Suddenly an incident, very insignificant apparently, but which by assuming larger proportions brought about the inevitable crisis—forced the Queen to declare herself, and Madame de Chevreuse to plunge deeper into a baleful enterprise, the idea of which had already forced itself upon her imagination. A great scandal occurred. We allude to a quarrel between the two duchesses, de Longueville and de Montbazon.

CHAPTER II.

THE DUCHESS DE MONTBAZON.—THE AFFAIR OF THE DROPPED LETTERS.—THE QUARREL OF THE TWO DUCHESSES.

On declaring itself of the party of Mazarin, the house of Condé had drawn down the hatred of the *Importants*, though their hostility scarcely fell upon Madame de Longueville. Her gentleness in everything in which her heart was not seriously engaged, her entire indifference to politics at this period of her life, with the graces of her mind and person, rendered her pleasing to every one, and shielded her from party spite. But apart from affairs of State, she had an enemy, and a formidable enemy, in the Duchess de Montbazon. We have said that Madame de Montbazon had been the mistress of the Duke de Longueville, and as one of the principal personages of the drama we are about to relate, she requires to be somewhat better known.

We shall pass over in silence many of her foibles, without attempting to excuse any. Before sketching her life, or at least a portion of it, it will be necessary, in order to protect her memory against an excess of severity, to recall certain traditions and examples for which unhappily her family was notorious.

Daughter of Claude de Bretagne, Baron d'Avangour, she was on her mother's side granddaughter of that very complaisant Marquis de La Varenne Fouquet, who, successively scullion, cook, and maître d'hôtel of Henry the Fourth,

"gained more by carrying the amorous King's *poulets* than basting those in his kitchen." Catherine Fouquet, Countess de Vertus, his daughter, Madame de Montbazon's mother, was beautiful, witty, somewhat giddy, and very gallant. Impatient of all hindrance, she had authorised one of her lovers to assassinate her husband; but it was the husband who assassinated the lover. The tragical termination of this rencontre does not seem to have cast a gloom over the life of the Countess de Vertus, for at seventy she began to learn to dance, and when seventy-three, married a young man over head and ears in debt.

In 1628, Marie d'Avangour quitted her convent to espouse Hercule de Rohan, Duke de Montbazon, who was the father, by his first marriage, of Madame de Chevreuse and of the Prince de Guéméné. She was sixteen, and he sixty-one. Thorough fool as he was, the Duke did not conceal from himself, it is said, the conviction that such an union was fraught with some danger to him; but we may venture to affirm that he could not have foreseen all its dangers. Full of respect for the virtues of Marie de' Medicis, he recommended her example to his wife; then, with every confidence in the future, he conducted her to Court.

In beauty the daughter was worthy of the mother, but in vices she left her far behind. Tallemant says she was one of the loveliest women imaginable. Her mind was not her most brilliant side, and the little that she had was turned to intrigue and perfidy. "Her mind," says the indulgent Madame de Motteville, "was not so fine as her person; her brilliancy was limited to her eyes, which commanded love. She claimed universal admiration." In regard to her character, all are unanimous. De Retz, who knew her well, speaks of her in these terms: "Madame de Montbazon was a very

great beauty. Modesty was wanting in her air. Her jargon might, during a dull hour, have supplied the defects of her mind. She showed but little faith in gallantry, none in business. She loved her own pleasure alone, and above her pleasure her interest. I never saw a person who, in vice, preserved so little respect for virtue." Supremely vain and passionately fond of money, it was by the aid of her beauty that she sought influence and fortune. She, therefore, took infinite care of it, as of her idol, as of her resources, her treasure. She kept it in repair, heightened it by all sorts of artifices, and preserved it almost uninjured till her death. Madame de Motteville asserts that, during the latter part of her life, she was as full of vanity as if she were but twenty-five years of age; that she had the same desire to please, and that she wore her mourning garb in so charming a manner, that "the order of nature seemed changed, since age and beauty could be found united." Ten years before, in 1647, at the age of thirty-five, when Mazarin gave a comedy in the Italian style, that is, an opera, there was in the evening a grand ball, and the Duchess de Montbazon was present, adorned with pearls, with a red feather on her head, and so dazzling in her appearance that the whole company was completely charmed. We can imagine what she was in 1643, at the age of thirty-one.

Of the two conditions of perfect beauty—strength and grace, Madame de Montbazon possessed the first in the highest degree. She was tall and majestic, and she had all the charms of embonpoint. Her throat reminded one of the fulness, in this particular, of the antique statues—exceeding them, perhaps, somewhat. What struck the beholder most were her eyes and hair of intense blackness, upon a skin of the most dazzling white. Her defect was a

nose somewhat too prominent, with a mouth so large as to give her face an appearance of severity. It will be seen that she was the very opposite of Madame de Longueville. The latter was tall, but not to excess. The richness of her form did not diminish its delicacy. A moderate embonpoint exhibited, in full and exquisite measure, the beauty of the female form. Her eyes were of the softest blue; her hair of the most beautiful blonde. She had the most majestic air, and yet her peculiar characteristic was grace. To these were added the great difference of manners and tone. Madame de Longueville was, in her deportment, dignity, politeness, modesty, sweetness itself, with a languor and nonchalance which formed not her least charm. Her words were few, as well as her gestures; the inflexions of her voice were a perfect music.* The excess, into which she never fell, might have been a sort of fastidiousness. Everything in her was wit, sentiment, charm. Madame de Montbazon, on the contrary, was free of speech, bold and easy in her tone, full of stateliness and pride.

The Duchess was, nevertheless, a very attractive creature when she desired to be so, and such we must conceive her to have been if we would take account of the admiration she excited, and not exactly like the person which Cousin represents her when, at the age of nearly forty, she had become "a Colossus"—to use Tallemant's phrase. At the same time it is true that, even in youth, she had less grace than strength, less delicacy than majesty. It is also true that she was free of speech, and in tone was bold and offhand; but those very defects for which she was remarkable only the better assured her empire over what, in modern parlance, would be termed the "fast" portion of the Court, and the

* Villefore, p. 32.

sentiments to which she gave utterance revealed the most singular extravagance. But not a single voice protested when the Duke d'Hocquincourt proclaimed her *la belle des belles.* In the eyes of the foreigner she was the marvel which the generals who dreamed of the capture of Paris coveted; in other words, she was *par excellence* "the booty" most desirable, on the subject of which the Duke of Weimar perpetrated a thoroughly German joke, which we must be pardoned for not repeating: Anne of Austria might have smiled at it without blushing, but it is too gross to risk raising a laugh by its repetition in our days.

She had a great number of adorers, and of happy adorers, from Gaston Duke of Orleans, and the Count de Soissons, slain at Marfée, to Rancé, the young and gallant editor of Anacreon, and the future founder of La Trappe. M. de Longueville had been for some time her lover by title, and he afforded her considerable advantages. When he married Mademoiselle de Bourbon, Madame the Princess exacted—without, however, being very faithfully obeyed—the discontinuance of all intercourse with his old mistress. Hence, in that interested soul, an irritation, which wounded vanity redoubled, when she saw this young bride, with her great name, her marvellous mind, her indefinable charms, advance into the world of gallantry, without the least effort draw after her all hearts, and take possession of, or at least share that empire of beauty of which she was so proud, and which was to her so precious. On the other hand, the Duke de Beaufort had not been able to restrain a passionate admiration for Madame de Longueville, which had been very coldly received. He was wounded by it, and his wound bled for a long time, as his friend, La Châtre,

informs us,* even after he had transferred his homage to Madame de Montbazon. The latter, as may be easily imagined, was again exasperated. Finally, the Duke de Guise, recently arrived in Paris, placed himself in the party of the *Importants* and at the service of Madame de Montbazon, who received him very favourably, at the same time she was striving to keep or recall the Duke de Longueville, and that she was ruling Beaufort, whose office near her was somewhat that of a *cavalier servente*. Thus it will be seen that Madame de Montbazon disposed through Beaufort and through Guise, as through her daughter-in-law Madame de Chevreuse, of the house of Vendôme and that of Lorraine, and she employed all this influence to the profit of her hatred against Madame de Longueville. She burned to injure her, and was not long in finding an opportunity of doing it.

One day when a numerous company was assembled in her salon, one of her young lady friends picked up a couple of letters which had been dropped on the floor, bearing no signatures, but in a feminine handwriting, and of a somewhat equivocal style. They were read, and a thousand jokes perpetrated concerning them, and some effort made to discover the author. They were from a woman who wrote tenderly to some one whom she did not hate. Madame de Montbazon pretended that they had fallen from the pocket of Maurice de Coligny, who had just gone out, and that they were in the handwriting of Madame de Longueville. The word of command thus once given, the Duke de Beaufort was amongst the first to spread the insinuation which was a calumny, all the echoes of the party of the *Importants* took it up, and Madame de Montbazon herself found plea-

* Mémoires of La Châtre. Petitot Collection, vol. li. p. 230.

sure in repeating it during several following days, so that the incident became the entertainment of the Court. A frivolous curiosity has very faithfully preserved the text of the two letters thus found at the Duchess's house.*

I.

"I should much more regret the change in your conduct if I thought myself less worthy of a continuation of your affection. I confess to you that so long as I believed it to be true and warm, mine gave you all the advantages which you could desire. Now, hope nothing more from me than the esteem which I owe to your discretion. I have too much pride to share the passion which you have so often sworn to me, and I desire to punish your negligence in seeing me, in no other way than by depriving you entirely of my society. I request that you will visit me no more, since I have no longer the power of commanding your presence."

II.

"To what conclusion have you come after so long a silence? Do you not know that the same pride which rendered me sensible to your past affection forbids me to endure the false appearances of its continuation! You say that my suspicions and my inequalities render you the most unhappy person in the world. I assure you that I believe no such thing, although I cannot deny that you have perfectly loved me, as you must confess that my esteem has worthily recompensed you. So far we have done each other justice, and I am determined not to have in the end less goodness, if your conduct responds to my intentions. You would find them less unreasonable if you had more passion, and the difficulties of seeing me would only augment instead of diminishing it. I suffer for loving too much, and you for not loving enough. If I must believe you, let us exchange humours. I shall find repose in doing my duty, and you in doing yours, and you must fail in doing yours, in order to obtain liberty. I do not perceive that I forget the manner in which I passed the winter with you, and that I speak to you as frankly as I have heretofore done. I hope that you will make as good use of it, and that I shall not regret being overcome in the resolution which I have made to return to it no more. I shall remain at home for three or four days in succession, and will be seen only in the evening: you know the reason."

These letters were not forgeries. They had been really

* Mémoires of Madlle. de Montpensier, vol. i. pp. 62, 63.

written by Madame de Fouquerolles to the handsome and elegant Marquis de Maulevrier, who had been silly enough to drop them in Madame de Montbazon's *salon*. Maulevrier, trembling at being discovered, and at having compromised Madame de Fouquerolles, ran to La Rochefoucauld, who was his friend, confided to him his secret, and begged him to undertake to hush up the affair. La Rochefoucauld made Madame de Montbazon understand that it was for her interest to be generous on this occasion, for the error or fraud would be easily recognised as soon as the writing should be compared with that of Madame de Longueville. Madame de Montbazon placed the original letters in the hands of La Rochefoucauld, who showed them to M. the Prince and to Madame the Princess, to Madame de Rambouillet, and to Madame Sablé, particular friends of Madame de Longueville, and, the truth being well established, burned them in the presence of the Queen, delivering Maulevrier and Madame de Fouquerolles from the terrible anxiety into which they had been for some time thrown.

The house of Condé felt a lively resentment at the insult offered to it. The Duke and Duchess de Longueville desired, it is true, the one by a sentiment of interested prudence, the other by a just feeling of dignity, to take no further notice of the matter. But the Princess, impelled by her high spirit, and still intoxicated by her son's success, exacted a reparation equal to the offence, and declared loudly that, if the Queen and the government did not defend the honour of her house, she and all her family would withdraw from the Court. She was indignant at the mere idea of placing her daughter in the scales with the granddaughter of a cook. In vain did the whole party of the *Importants*, with Beaufort and Guise at their head, agitate and threaten;

in vain did Madame de Chevreuse, who had not yet lost all her influence with the Queen, strive earnestly in behalf of her mother-in-law. It did not suffice for the resentment of the Princess and the Duke d'Enghien that Madame de Longueville's innocence was fully recognised; they demanded a public reparation. Madame de Motteville has left us an amusing recital of the "mummeries," as she terms them, of which she was a witness.

The Queen was in her state cabinet and the Princess beside her, in great emotion and looking very fierce, declaring the affair to be nothing less than the crime of high treason. Madame de Chevreuse, interested for a thousand reasons in the quarrel of her mother-in-law, was busy with Cardinal Mazarin arranging the composition of the apology to be made. At every word there was a *pour-parler* of half an hour. The Cardinal went from one side to the other to accommodate the difference, as if such a peace was necessary for the welfare of France, and his own in particular. It was arranged that the criminal should present herself at the Princess's hotel on the morrow.

The apology was written upon a small piece of paper and attached to her fan, in order that she might repeat it word for word to the Princess. She did it in the most haughty manner possible, assuming an air which seemed to say, "I jest in every word I utter."

Mademoiselle de Montpensier gives us the two speeches made upon the occasion. "Madame, I come here to protest to you that I am innocent of the wickedness of which I have been accused: no person of honour could utter a calumny such as this. If I had committed a like fault, I should have submitted to any punishment which it might have pleased the Queen to inflict upon me; I should never

have shown myself again in the world, and would have asked your pardon. I beg you to believe that I shall never fail in the respect which I owe to you and in the opinion which I have of the virtue and of the merit of Madame de Longueville."* That lady was not present at the ceremony, and her mother, to whom the Duchess addressed herself, made a very short and dry reply. This reconciliation did not deceive any one of those present; it was, in fact, only a fresh declaration of war.

Besides the satisfaction which she had just obtained, the Princess had asked and had been permitted the privilege of never associating with the Duchess de Montbazon. Some time after, Madame de Chevreuse invited the Queen to a collation in the public garden of Renard. This was then the rendezvous of the best society. It was at the termination of the Tuileries, near the Porte de la Conférence, which abutted on the *Cours de la Reine*. In the summer, on returning from the *Cours*, which was the "Rotten Row" of the day, and the spot where the beauties of the time exercised their powers, it was customary to stop at the garden Renard for the purpose of taking refreshments, and to listen to serenades performed after the Spanish fashion. The Queen took pleasure in visiting this place during fine summer evenings. She desired Madame the Princess to partake with her the collation offered by Madame de Chevreuse, assuring her at the same time that Madame de Montbazon would not be present; but the latter person was really there, and even pretended to do the honours of the collation as mother-in-law of the lady who gave it. The Princess wished to withdraw, in order that the entertainment might not be disturbed: the Queen had no right whatever to

* Mémoires, vol. i. p. 65.

detain her. She, therefore, begged Madame de Montbazon to pretend sickness, and by leaving the party, to relieve her from embarrassment. The haughty Duchess would not consent to fly before her enemy, and kept her place. The Queen, offended, refused the collation and quitted the promenade. On the morrow an order from the King enjoined upon Madame de Montbazon to leave Paris. This disgrace irritated the *Importants*. They thought themselves humiliated and enfeebled, and there were no violent or extreme measures which they did not contemplate. The Duke de Beaufort, smitten at once in his influence and his love, uttered loud denunciations, and it was reported that a plot had been formed against the life of Mazarin.

CHAPTER III.

THE IMPORTANTS.

It is necessary, at this juncture, to have a just idea of the general position of political affairs in France, as well as of the attitude of the faction known as the *Importants*, who were then most active in opposing the government of Mazarin, in order to understand clearly the gravity of an incident which otherwise in itself might seem to be of little consequence.

La Rochefoucauld, the historian of that party, has made us tolerably familiar with the men who composed it. They were a band of eccentric and mischievous spirits, bold of heart, ready of hand, and of boundless fidelity to one another. Professing to hold the most outrageous maxims, incessantly invoking Brutus and old Rome, and intermingling gallant with political intrigues, they suffered themselves to be hurried beyond the bounds of reason through a Quixotic idea of always pleasing the ladies. They had all been more or less fellow-sufferers with Anne of Austria during the period of her affliction and persecution by Richelieu, and from the commencement of her Regency, these returning exiles and liberated prisoners had been gathering round her until at last, formed into a faction, they gave themselves out as the Queen's party, and by adopting a high-flown, turgid, and mysterious style of phraseology, and assuming bombastic and braggart airs of authority, coupled

with an affectation of capacity and profundity, obtained for themselves from the wits of the Court and city the nickname of *The Importants*, under which they figured until absorbed a few years later in the more general and popular designation of *Frondeurs*. Their favourite chief was the Duke de Beaufort, of whom we have already spoken as possessing very nearly the same characteristics as the rest—at once artificial and extravagant, with great pretensions to loyalty and patriotism, professing to be a man of independent action, but in fact wholly ruled by Madame de Montbazon, who, in her turn, was swayed by the Duchess de Chevreuse.

On the sudden disappearance from Paris of one of the most distinguished of the lady leaders of the *Importants*—like a star of the first magnitude fallen from their system—the entire party was thrown into commotion, whilst the more intimate friends and admirers of the banished beauty raised a fierce outcry. Such an open disgrace of the young and beautiful Duchess sorely irritated her restless partisans. They considered themselves humiliated and weakened by it, and there was no violence or extremity to which they were not prepared to resort. Her slave and adorer, the Duke de Beaufort, assailed at once on the score of his political interest and personal gallantry, vapoured and stormed furiously. Thoughts of vengeance, which, like the mutterings of an approaching tempest, had begun to brood beneath the roof of the Hôtel de Vendôme, now became concentrated in a plot to get rid of Mazarin by fair means or foul, divers modes of its execution being earnestly discussed.

In such conjunctures, the Cardinal rose to the level of Richelieu. At the same time he had to secure safety and success mainly through his own courage and patience. But he knew right well how to play his part. The wily minister

already stood well with the Queen—had begun to seem necessary, or at least very useful to her, though Anne of Austria had not yet formally declared her approval of his policy. Mazarin represented to her what she owed alike to the State and the royal authority now seriously theatened. That she must prefer the interest of her son and his crown to friendships—satisfactory enough at other times, but which had now become dangerous. He brought before her eyes most indubitable proofs of a conspiracy to take his life, and entreated her to choose between his enemies and himself. Anne of Austria did not hesitate, and the ruin of the *Importants* was decided upon.

More dangerous ground could scarcely have been found whereon to post the *Importants*. The Duchess de Montbazon, as disreputable in morals and character as she was remarkable for her beauty, had attacked a young wife, who, having just made her appearance at the Regent's court, had already become the object of universal admiration. To a loveliness at once so graceful and dazzling that it was pronounced to be angelic, Madame de Longueville added great intelligence, a most noble heart, and was a person of all others whom it behoved the *Importants* to conciliate; for her natural generosity of character had disinclined her to side with the party of repression, and thereby had even given some umbrage to the Prime Minister. At that moment, she was merely occupied with intellectual pursuits, innocent gallantry, and above all with the fame of her brother, the Duke d'Enghien; but there were, it must be owned, already perceptible in her mind, some germs of an *Important*, which, later, Rochefoucauld knew only too well how to develop. But the slanderous attack that had been made upon her, the disgraceful motive of which was suffi-

ciently clear, revolted every honest heart. The ungovernable impetuosity of Beaufort on this occasion was—as it deserved to be—strongly stigmatised. Having formerly paid his addresses to Mademoiselle de Bourbon, and been rejected, his conduct assumed the aspect of an obvious revenge. Moreover, Madame de Chevreuse's every effort being directed towards depriving Mazarin of supporters, she incited the devotees of either sex who were about the Queen to act against him, and Madame de Longueville was no less the idol of the Carmelites and the party of the *Saints* than that of the Hôtel de Rambouillet. Again, the Duke d'Enghien, already covered with the laurels of Rocroy, and about to entwine therewith those of Thionville, was so evidently the arbiter of the situation, that Madame de Chevreuse insisted, with much force, that Mazarin should be got rid of whilst the young Duke was occupied with the distant enemy, and before he should return from the army. To wound him through so susceptible a medium as that of an adored sister, to turn him against herself without any necessity, and hasten his return, would be a silly extravagance. Therefore, all who had any sense among the *Importants*—La Rochefoucauld, La Châtre, and Campion—anxiously sought to hush up and terminate this deplorable affair; and Madame de Chevreuse, sedulous to pay court to the Queen at the same time that she was weaving a subtle plot against her minister, had prepared the little fête for her at Renard's garden with the design of dispersing the last remaining cloudlets of the lately-spent tempest. But the Duchess's politic purpose was, as we have seen, destined to fail through the insane pride of a woman who was as senseless as she was heartless.*

* Alexandre de Campion, in the *Recueil* before cited, writes to Madame

Under these critical circumstances how did it behove Madame de Chevreuse to act? She was compelled to restrain Madame de Montbazon, but she could neither abandon her nor be false to herself. She resolved therefore to follow up energetically the formidable project which had become the last hope and supreme resource of her party. Through Madame de Montbazon, Beaufort had been dragged into it. The latter had mustered the men of action already mentioned, and who were wholly devoted to him. A plot had been devised and every measure concerted for surprising and perhaps killing the Cardinal.

de Montbazon :—"Si mon avis eut été suivi chez Renard, vous seriez sortie, pour obéir à la Reine, vous n'habiteriez pas la maison de Rochefort, et nous ne serions pas dans le péril dont nous sommes menacés."

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONSPIRACY OF THE DUCHESS DE CHEVREUSE AND THE DUKE DE BEAUFORT TO GET RID OF MAZARIN.

One need not be greatly astonished at such an enterprise on the part of two women of high rank and a grandson of Henry the Great. At that stirring epoch of French history —the interval between the League and the Fronde—energy and strength were the distinctive traits of the French aristocracy. Neither court life nor a corrupting opulence had yet enervated it. Everything was then in extremes, in vice as in virtue. Men attacked and defended one another with the same weapons. The Marshal d'Ancre had been massacred; more than one attempt had been made to assassinate Richelieu; whilst he, on his side, had not been backward in having recourse to the sword and block. Corneille paints faithfully the spirit of the epoch. His Emilie is also involved in an assassination, and she is not the less represented as a perfect heroine. Madame de Chevreuse had long been accustomed to conspiracies; she was bold and unscrupulous. She did not gather round her such men as Beaupuis, Saint-Ybar, De Varicarville, and de Campion merely to pass the time in idle conversation. She had not remained a stranger to the designs they had formerly concocted against Richelieu, for in 1643 she fomented, as we have seen, their exaltation and their devotedness; and it was not unreasonable, certainly, that Mazarin should attri-

bute to her the first idea of the project which Beaufort was to accomplish.

At the same time it must be remembered that the *Importants* and their successors the *Frondeurs* denied this project and declared it the invention of the Cardinal. It is a point of the highest historical importance and deserves serious examination, as upon this conspiracy, real or imaginary, as may be determined after careful investigation, rests the fact whether Mazarin owed in reality all his career and the great future which then opened before him to a falsehood cunningly invented and audaciously sustained; or whether Madame de Chevreuse and the *Importants*, after having tried their utmost against him, now resolving to destroy him with the armed hand, were themselves destroyed and became the instruments of his triumph. The evidence available irresistibly leads to the latter conclusion, and we think that we shall be able to show that the plot attributed to the *Importants*, far from being a chimæra, was the almost inevitable solution of the violent crisis just described.

La Rochefoucauld, without having indulged in the insane hopes of his friends and lent his hand to their rash enterprise, made it a point of honour to defend them after their discomfiture, and set himself to cover the retreat. He affects to doubt whether the plot which then made so much noise was real or supposititious. In his eyes, the greater probability was that the Duke de Beaufort, by a false *finesse*, endeavoured to excite alarm in the Cardinal, believing that it was sufficient to strike terror into his mind to force him to quit France, and that it was with this view that he held secret meetings and gave them the appearance of conspiracy. La Rochefoucauld constitutes himself especially the champion of Madame de Chevreuse's innocence, and declares

himself thoroughly persuaded that she was ignorant of Beaufort's designs.

After the historian of the *Importants*, that of the *Frondeurs* holds very nearly the same arguments. Like La Rochefoucauld, De Retz has only one object in his Memoirs—that of investing himself with a semblance of capacity and making a great figure in every way, in evil as well as good. He is often more truthful, because he cares less about other people, and that he is disposed to sacrifice all the world except himself. In this matter it is hard to conceive the motive for his reserve and incredulity. He knew right well that the majority of the persons accused of having taken part in the plot had already been implicated in more than one such business. He himself tells us that he had conspired with the Count de Soissons, that he had blamed him for not having struck down Richelieu at Amiens, and that with La Rochepot, he, the Abbé de Retz, had formed the design of assassinating him at the Tuileries during the ceremony of the baptism of Mademoiselle (de Montpensier). The Coadjutorship of the Archbishopric of Paris, which the Regent had just granted him, in consideration of his own services and the virtues of his father, had mollified him, it is true; but his old accomplices, who had not been so well treated as he, had remained faithful to their cause, to their designs, to their habitudes. Was De Retz then sincere when he refused to believe that they had attempted against Mazarin that which he had seen them undertake, and which he had himself undertaken against Richelieu? In his blind hatred he throws everything upon Mazarin: he pretends that he was terrified, or that he feigned terror. It was the Abbé de la Rivière, he tells us, who, in order to rid himself of the rivalry of the Count de Montrésor in the Duke d'Orleans'

favour, must have persuaded Mazarin that there was a plot set on foot against him, in which Montrésor was mixed up. It was the Prince de Condé also who must have tried to destroy Beaufort through fear lest his son, the Duke d'Enghien, might engage with him in some duel, as he wished to do, to avenge his sister, during the short visit he made to Paris after taking Thionville.

To the suspicious opinions of de Retz and La Rochefoucauld let us oppose testimony more distinterested, and before all other the silence of Montrésor,* who, whilst protesting that neither he nor his friend the Count de Béthune had meddled with the conspiracy imputed to the Duke de Beaufort, says not a single word against the reality of that conspiracy, which he would not have failed to ridicule had he believed it imaginary. Madame de Motteville, who was not in the habit of overwhelming the unfortunate, after having reported with impartiality the different rumours circulated at Court, relates certain facts which appear to her authentic, and which are decisive.† One of the best informed and most truthful of contemporary historians expresses not the slightest doubt on this head. "The *Importants*," says Monglat, "seeing that they could not drive the Cardinal out of France, resolved to despatch him with their daggers, and held several councils on this subject at the Hôtel de Vendôme." That opinion is confirmed by new and numerous particulars with which Mazarin's *carnets* and confidental letters furnish us.

The person whom Mazarin signalizes in his *carnets* and letters as the trusted friend of Beaufort and after him the principal accused, the Count de Beaupuis, son of the Count

* Mémoires, Petitot Collection, t. lix.

† Mémoires, t. i., p. 184.

de Maillé, had found means of sheltering himself from the minister's first searches; he had succeeded in escaping from France and sought an asylum at Rome under the avowed protection of Spain. Mazarin left no stone unturned to obtain from the Court of Rome the extradition of Beaupuis, in order that he might be legally tried. The Pope at first could not refuse, at least for form's sake, to have Beaupuis committed to the Castle of St. Angelo. But he was soon liberated, and provided with a State lodging wherein he was allowed to see nearly every one who came. Mazarin complained loudly of such indulgence. "It is all arranged," said he, "that when necessary he may escape, or at any rate the Duke de Vendôme is furnished with every facility for poisoning him, in order that with Beaupuis may perish the principal proof of his son's treason. If all this happened in Barbary, people would be highly indignant. And this is suffered to take place in Rome, in the capital of Christianity, under the eyes and by the orders of a Pope!"

Failing Beaupuis, Mazarin would have liked to put his hand upon one of the brothers Campion, intimately connected as they were with Beaufort and Madame de Chevreuse, and too closely in the confidence of both not to know all their secrets. He himself complains, as we have seen, of being very badly seconded. And then he had to do with emerited conspirators, consummate in the art of concealing themselves and of leaving no trace of their whereabouts—with the active and indefatigable Duchess de Chevreuse, and with the Duke de Vendôme, who, in order to save his son, set about forwarding the escape of all those whose depositions might help to convict him, or kept them somehow in his own hands, hidden and shut up close at Anet. Mazarin was thus only able to arrest a few obscure individuals who

were ignorant of the plot, and could throw no light upon it.

But it is needless to exhaust existing proofs in demonstration of the fact that Mazarin did not enact a farce by instituting proceedings against the conspirators, that he pursued them with sincerity and vigour, and that he was perfectly convinced that a project of assassination had been formed against him, when the existence of that project is elsewhere averred, when, in default of a sentence of the parliament, which could not have been given in the teeth of insufficient evidence, neither Beaupuis, nor the Campions, nor Lié, nor Brillet having been arrested, better proof being extant in the full and entire confession of one of the principal conspirators, with the plan and all the details of the affair set forth in Memoirs of comparatively recent publication, but the authenticity of which cannot be contested. We allude to the precious Memoirs of Henri de Campion,* brother of Madame de Chevreuse's friend, whom that lady had introduced also to the service of the Duke de Vendôme, and more particularly to that of the Duke de Beaufort. Henri had accompanied the Duke in his flight to England after the conspiracy of Cinq Mars, and he had returned with him; he possessed his entire confidence, and he relates nothing in which he himself had not taken a considerable part. Henri's character was very different to that of his brother Alexandre. He was a well-educated man, full of honour and courage, not in the least given to boasting, averse to all intrigue, and born to make his way through life by the straightest paths in the career of arms. He wrote these Memoirs in solitude, to which after the loss of

* "Mémoires de Henri de Campion, &c.," 1807. Treuttel and Würtz. Paris.

his daughter and his wife he had retired to await death amidst the exercise of a genuine piety. It is not in such a frame of mind that a man is disposed to invent fables, and there is no middle way. What he says is that which we must believe absolutely, or if we have any doubt that he speaks the truth, he must be considered as the worst of villains. No interested feeling could have directed his pen, for he compiled his Memoirs, or at least he finished them, a short time after Mazarin's death, without thought, therefore, of paying court to him by making very tardy revelations, and scarcely two years before he himself died in 1663. Thus it may be fairly inferred that Henri de Campion wrote strictly under the inspiration of his conscience. One has only to open his Memoirs to see confirmed, point by point, all the particulars with which Mazarin's *carnets* are filled. Nothing is there wanting, everything coincides, all marvellously corresponds. It appears, indeed, as though Mazarin in making his notes had had before his eyes de Campion's Memoirs, or that the latter whilst penning them had Mazarin's *carnets* before him: he at once so thoroughly takes up the thread and completes them.

His brother Alexandre, in his letters of the month of August, 1643, had already let slip more than one mysterious sentence. He wrote to Madame de Montbazon in banishment:—"You must not despair, madam, there are still some half-a-dozen honest folks who do not give up. . . . Your illustrious friend will not abandon you. If to be prudent it were necessary to renounce your acquaintance, there are those who would prefer rather to pass for fools all their days." Like Montrésor, he does not once say that there was no plot framed against Mazarin, which is a kind of tacit avowal; and when the storm burst, he took care to conceal

himself, advised Beaupuis to do the same, and ends with these significant words:—"In embarking in Court affairs one cannot be certain of being master of events, and whilst we profit by the lucky ones, we must resolve to put up with the unlucky." Henri de Campion raises this already very transparent veil.

He declares plainly that there was a project on foot to get rid of Mazarin, and that that project was conceived, not by Beaufort, but by Madame de Chevreuse in concert with Madame de Montbazon. "I think," says he, "that the Duke's design did not spring from his own particular sentiment, but from the persuasion of the duchesses de Chevreuse and de Montbazon, who exercised entire sway over his mind and had an irreconcileable hatred to the Cardinal. What makes me say so, is that, whilst he was under that resolution, I always observed that he had an internal repugnance which, if I mistake not, was overcome by some pledge which he may have given to those ladies." There *was*, therefore, a plot, and its real author, as Mazarin truly said, and Campion repeats, was Madame de Chevreuse; if so, Madame de Montbazon was only an instrument in her hands.

Beaufort, once inveigled, drew in also his intimate friend, Count de Maillé's son, the Count de Beaupuis, cornet in the Queen's horse-guards. To them Madame de Chevreuse adjoined Alexandre de Campion, the elder brother of Henri. "She loved him much," remarks the latter, and in a way which, added to certain ambiguous words of Alexandre, excites suspicion whether the elder Campion were not in fact one of the numerous successors of Chalais. He was then thirty-three, and his brother confesses that he had caught from the Count de Soissons the taste for and the

habitudes of faction. Beaupuis and Alexandre de Campion approved of the plot when communicated to them, "the former," says Henri, "believing that it would be a means for him of attaining to a position of greater importance, and my brother seeing therein Madame de Chevreuse's advantage and by consequence his own."

Such were the two first accomplices of Beaufort. A little later he opened his mind on the subject to Henri de Campion, one of his principal gentlemen; to Lié, captain of his guards; and to Brillet, his equerry. There the secret rested. Many other gentlemen and domestics of the house of Vendôme were destined to take action in the affair, but were admitted to no confidence. The project was well conceived and worthy of Madame de Chevreuse. There were at most five or six conspirators—three capable of keeping the secret, and who did keep it. Below them, the men of action, who did not know what they would be called on to do; and in the background, the men of the morrow, who might be reckoned upon to applaud the blow, when it had been struck, without it being judged fitting to admit them to the conspiracy. At least Henri de Campion does not even name Montrésor, Béthune, Fontraille, Varicarville, Saint-Ybar, which explains wherefore Mazarin, whilst keeping his eye upon them, did not have them arrested. Neither does Campion speak of Chandenier, La Châtre, de Treville, the Duke de Bouillon, the Duke de Guise, De Retz, nor La Rochefoucauld, whose sentiments were not doubtful, but who were not inclined to go so far as to sully their hands with an assassination. And that further explains the silence of Mazarin with regard to them in all that relates to Beaufort's conspiracy, although he did not cherish the slightest illusion as to their dispositions, and as to the part they would have

taken if the plot had succeeded, or even if a serious struggle had taken place.

The conspiracy rested for some time between Madame de Chevreuse, Madame de Montbazon, Beaufort, Beaupuis, and Alexandre de Campion. The final resolution was only taken at the end of July or in the first days of August, that is to say, precisely during the height of the quarrel between Madame de Montbazon and Madame de Longueville, which ushered in the crisis and opened the door to all the events which followed. It was then only that Beaufort spoke of it to Henri de Campion, in presence of Beaupuis. Mazarin's crime was the continuation of Richelieu's system. "The Duke de Beaufort told me that he thought I had remarked that the Cardinal Mazarin was re-establishing at court and throughout the kingdom the tyranny of Cardinal de Richelieu, with even more of authority and violence than had been shown under the government of the latter; that having entirely gained the Queen's mind and made all the ministers devoted to him, it was impossible to arrest his evil designs save by depriving him of life; that the public weal having made him resolve to take that step, he informed me of it in order that I might aid him with my advice and personally assist in its execution. Beaupuis next 'took up his parable,' and warmly represented the evils which the too great authority of Richelieu had caused France, and concluded by saying that we must prevent the like inconvenience before his successor had rendered matters remediless." Such conclusion embodied as nearly as possible the views and language of *Importants* and *Frondeurs*, of La Rochefoucauld and De Retz. Henri de Campion represents himself as having at first combatted the Duke's project with so much force that more than once he was shaken; but

the two duchesses wound him up again very quickly, and Beaupuis and Alexandre de Campion, instead of holding him back, encouraged him. Shortly afterwards, Beaufort having declared that he had made up his mind, Henri de Campion gave in on two conditions: "The one," he tells us, "of not laying his hand on the Cardinal, since I would rather take my own life than do a deed of such nature. The other, that if the Duke should arrange that the project should be put into execution during his absence, I would never mix myself up in it; whereas if he were himself to be present, I should without scruple keep myself near his person, in order to defend him against any mischance that might happen, my duty and affection towards him equally obliging me thereto. He granted me those two conditions, testifying at the same time that he esteemed me more for having made them, and added that he would be present at the execution of the project, so that he might authorise it by his presence."

The plan was to attack the Cardinal in the street, whilst paying visits in his carriage, commonly having with him only a few ecclesiastics, besides five or six lackeys. It would be necessary to present themselves in force and unexpectedly, stop the vehicle and strike Mazarin. To do that, it was necessary that a certain number of the Vendôme domestics, who were not in the secret, should post themselves daily, from early morning, in the *cabarets* around the Cardinal's abode, which was then at the Hôtel de Cleves, near the Louvre. Among the domestics let into the secret, Henri de Campion names positively Gauseville. Over them were placed "the Sieurs d'Avancourt and De Brassy, Picardians, very resolute men and intimate friends of Lié." The pretext given out was that the Condés proposing to

put an affront upon Madame de Montbazon, the Duke de Beaufort, in order to oppose it, desired to have in hand a troop of gentlemen well mounted and armed. Their parts were allotted beforehand. A certain number were to pounce upon the Cardinal's coachman, at the same moment that others were to open the two doors and strike him, whilst the Duke would be at hand on horseback, with Beaupuis, Henri de Campion, and others, to cut down or drive off those who should be disposed to resist. Alexandre de Campion was to keep near the Duchess de Chevreuse and at her orders; and she herself ought more than ever to be assiduous in her attentions to the Queen, in order to smooth the way for her friends, and, in case of success, draw the Regent to the side of the victorious.

Several occasions favourable to the execution of this plan presented themselves. In the first instance, Henri de Campion being with his band in the Rue du Champ-Fleuri—one end of which joins the Rue Saint-Honoré and the other approaches the Louvre—saw the Cardinal leave the Hôtel de Cleves in his carriage with the Abbé de Bentivoglio, the nephew of the celebrated cardinal of that name, with a few ecclesiastics and valets. Campion inquired of one of them whither the Cardinal was going, and was answered—to visit the Marshal d'Estrées. "I saw," says Campion, "that if I had made use of the information, his death would have been inevitable. But I thought that I should be so guilty in the eyes of God and man that I resisted the temptation to do so."

The next day it was known that the Cardinal would be present at a collation to be given by Madame du Vigean at her charming residence of La Barre, at the entrance of the valley of Montmorency, where Madame de Longueville was

staying, and which the Queen had promised to honour with a visit, and who had already set out. The Cardinal was repairing thither, having with him in his coach only the Count d'Harcourt. Beaufort ordered Campion to assemble his troop and to ride after him, but Campion represented to the Duke that if they attacked the Cardinal in the company of the Count d'Harcourt, they must decide upon killing both, Harcourt being too generous to see Mazarin stabbed before his eyes without defending him, and that the murder of Harcourt would raise against them the entire house of Lorraine.

Some days afterwards information was given that the Cardinal was engaged to dine at Maisons, with the Marshal d'Estrées, to meet the Duke d'Orleans. "I made the Duke consent," says Campion, "that should the minister be in the same carriage with his Royal Highness, the design should not be executed; but he said, that if he were alone, he must be killed. Early in the morning he had the horses out and kept himself in readiness at the Capucins with Beaupuis, near the Hôtel de Vendôme, posting a valet on foot in the street to tell him when the Cardinal should pass, and enjoining me to keep with those whom I was accustomed to muster at the Cabaret l'Ange, in the Rue Saint-Honoré, very near the Hôtel de Vendôme, and if the Cardinal journeyed without the Duke d'Orleans, I should mount instantly with all my men, and intercept him when passing the Capucins. I was," adds Campion, "in a state of anxiety which may readily be imagined, until I saw the carriage of the Duke d'Orleans pass, and perceived the Cardinal inside with him."

At length, Beaufort's irritation being carried to the highest pitch by the banishment from court of Madame

de Montbazon (which was certainly on the 22nd of August), goaded by Madame de Chevreuse, by passion, and by a false sense of honour, he became himself impatient to act. Seeing that, during the day, he encountered incessant difficulties of which he was far from divining the cause, he resolved to strike the blow at night, and prepared an ambuscade, the success of which seemed certain, and the details of which we have from Campion. The Cardinal went every evening to visit the Queen, and returned sufficiently late. It was arranged to attack him between the Louvre and the Hôtel de Cleves. Horses were to be in readiness in some neighbouring inn. The Duke himself should keep watch with Beaupuis and Campion, during the time the minister should be with the Queen, and so soon as he came forth, all three should advance and make a signal to the rest, who, in the meanwhile, should remain on horseback on the quay, by the river side, close to the Louvre. All which could be very well done at night without awakening any suspicion.

It must be remembered that the person who furnishes these very precise details was one of the principal conspirators, that he wrote at sufficiently considerable distance from the event, in safety, and, to repeat it once again, with no interest, fearing nothing more from Mazarin, who had recently died, and expecting nothing from him. It must be also remembered that speaking as he has done, he accuses his own brother; that, without doubt, he attributes to himself laudable intentions and even some good actions, but that he confesses having entered into the plot, and that, if its execution had taken place he would have taken part in it, in fighting by the side of Beaufort. The process submitted to the parliament not having led to anything, through failure of

evidence, Campion did not imagine that Mazarin had ever known "the circumstances of the plot, nor those acquainted with it to the very bottom, and who were engaged in it." He adds also, "that now the Cardinal is dead there is no longer any reason to fear injuring any one in stating matters as they are." He therefore does not defend himself; he believes himself to be sheltered from all quest, he writes only to relieve his conscience.

From these curious revelations we further learn what importance Mazarin attached to the arrest of Henri Campion; and that writer's statements are not only substantially confirmed by various entries in the *carnets*, but read like a translation into French of those pages from the Cardinal's Italian. "They threw," he says, "into the Bastille, Avancourt and Brassy, where they deposed that I had mustered them on several occasions, on the part of the Duke de Beaufort, for the interests of Madame de Montbazon, as I had told them. This did not afford any motive for interrogating the Duke, since they owned that he had not spoken to them; thus he would not have failed to deny having given the orders which I carried to them on his part. It was then seen that the process against him could not be carried on before I had been arrested, in order to find matter whereon to interrogate him after my own depositions, and so thoroughly to embarrass us both that every trace of the affair might be discovered. The proof of this conspiracy was of most essential importance to the Cardinal, who directing all his efforts to the establishment of his government, and affecting to do so by gentle means, had been unfortunate enough to be constrained, in the outset, to use violence against one of the greatest men in the realm, for his own individual interest, without a conviction to prove

that he was compelled to treat the Duke with rigour. The Cardinal, despairing of being able to persuade others of that of which he was entirely assured, had a great desire to get me into his hands. He was nevertheless of opinion that he must give me time to reassure myself of safety in order to take me with the greater facility."

We may add to all this that Henri de Campion, sought after sharply, and closely shut up in his retreat at Anet, under the protection of the Duke de Vendôme, having fled from France and joined his friend the Count de Beaupuis at Rome, gives an account of the obstinate efforts made by Mazarin to obtain the extradition of the latter, the resistance of Pope Innocent X., the regard shown to Beaupuis when they were compelled to confine him in the Castle of Saint-Angelo; all of which being equally to be met with in the *carnets* and letters of Mazarin and the memoirs of Henri de Campion, places beyond doubt the perfect sincerity of the Cardinal's proceedings and the accuracy of his information.

Are not these, we may ask, proofs sufficient to reduce to naught the interested doubts of La Rochefoucauld and the passionate denials of the chief of the Fronde, the very clever but very little truthful Cardinal de Retz, the most ardent and most obstinate of Mazarin's enemies? It would seem, indeed, either that there is no certitude whatever in history, or that it must be considered henceforth as a point absolutely demonstrated that there was a project determined upon to kill Mazarin; that that project had been conceived by Madame de Chevreuse, and in some sort imposed by her upon Beaufort with the aid of Madame de Montbazon; that Beaufort had for principal accomplices the Count de Beaupuis and Alexandre de Campion; that Henri de Campion

had entered later into the affair, at the pressing solicitation of the Duke, as well as two other officers of secondary rank; that during the month of August there were divers serious attempts to put it into execution, particularly the last one after the banishment of Madame de Montbazon, at the very end of August or rather on the 1st of September; and that such attempt only failed through circumstances altogether independent of the will of the conspirators.

CHAPTER V.

FAILURE OF THE PLOT TO ASSASSINATE MAZARIN. ARREST OF BEAUFORT, BANISHMENT OF MADAME DE CHEVREUSE, AND DISPERSION OF THE "IMPORTANTS."

LET us now inquire how the last attempt against Mazarin's life—that nocturnal ambuscade so well planned and so deliberately set about on the 1st of September, 1643—chanced to fail, and what was the result of such failure. Without stopping to discuss the conjectures of Campion on this point, it may suffice to state that Mazarin, who was on his guard, evaded the blow destined for him by not visiting the Queen during the evening on which it was resolved to kill him as he should return from the Louvre. Next day the scene was changed. A rumour spread rapidly that the Prime Minister had expected to have been murdered by Beaufort and his friends, that he had escaped, fortune having declared in his favour. A plot to assassinate, more especially when it fails, invariably excites the strongest indignation, and the man who has extricated himself from a great peril and seems destined to sweep all such from his path, readily finds adherents and defenders. A host of people who would probably have supported Beaufort victorious, now flocked to offer their swords and services to the Cardinal, and on that morning he went to the Louvre escorted by three hundred gentlemen.

For several days previously, Mazarin had seen clearly

that, cost what it might, he must cut his way through the knotted intricacy of the situation, and that the moment had arrived for forcing Anne of Austria to choose her part. The occasion was decisive. If the peril which he had just undergone, and which was only suspended over his head, did not suffice to draw the Queen from her incertitude, it would prove that she did not love him; and Mazarin knew well that, amidst the many dangers surrounding him, his entire strength lay in the Queen's affection, and that thereon depended his present safety and future fate. Whether, therefore, through policy or sincere affection, it was always to Anne of Austria's heart that he addressed himself, and at the outset of the crisis he had said to himself: "If I believed that the Queen was merely making use of me through necessity, without having any personal inclination for me, I would not stay here three days longer."* But enough has been said to show plainly that Anne of Austria *loved* Mazarin. Comparing him with his rivals, she appreciated him daily more and more. She admired the precision and clearness of his intellect, his finesse and penetration, and that extraordinary energy which enabled him to bear the weight of government with marvellous ease—his quick and accurate introspection, his profound prudence, and at the same time the judicious vigour of his resolves. She saw the affairs of France prospering on all sides under his firm and skilful hand. The Cardinal, it is true, was not quite a nullity, in the fierce war which had inaugurated the new reign so dazzlingly; but a power of no slight weight was manifest in the success which had followed his advent

* Entry in Carnet, iii. p. 10, in Spanish :—"Sy yo creyera lo que dicen que S. M. se sierve di mi per necessidad, sin tener alguna inclination, no pararia aqui tres dias."

to office, and which proved to startled Europe that the victory of Rocroy was not a lucky stroke of chance. When every member of the Council was opposed to the siege of Thionville, and when Turenne himself, on being consulted, did not venture to declare his opinion on the subject, it was Mazarin who had insisted with an unflinching persistence that the victory of Rocroy should be profited by, and that France should extend her frontier to the Rhine. That proposition, doubtless, emanated from the youthful conqueror, but Mazarin had the merit of comprehending, sustaining, and causing it to triumph. If no first minister had ever before been so served by such a general, neither had general ever been so supported by such a minister; and thanks to both, on the 11th of August, whilst the chivalrous *Importants* were exhausting their combined talents in putting a shameful affront upon the noble sister of the hero who had just served France so gloriously, and who was about to aggrandize it further—whilst they were displaying their vapid and turgid eloquence in the *salons*, or sharpening their poniards in gloomy council chambers, Thionville, then one of the chief strongholds of the Empire, surrendered after an obstinate defence. Thus, the Regency of Anne of Austria had opened under the most brilliant auspices.

But in the height of this national glory and signal triumph, Queen Anne must indeed have shuddered when Mazarin placed before her all the proofs of the odious conspiracy formed against him. Explanations the most minute and confidential thereupon ensued between them. It was now more than ever compulsory for her to "raise the mask,"* to sacrifice to a manifest necessity the circumspection she was studious of preserving—to brave somewhat

* "Quitarse la maschera." Carnet, ii. p. 65.

further the tittle-tattle of a few devotees of either sex, and at all events to permit her Prime Minister to defend his life. Up to this moment Anne of Austria had hesitated, for reasons which may be readily comprehended. But Madame de Montbazon's insolence had greatly irritated her; the conviction she acquired that numerous attempts to assassinate Mazarin had only by chance failed, and might be renewed, decided her; and it was, therefore, towards the close of August, 1643, when the date of that declared ascendancy, open and unrivalled, must be certainly fixed, of the Minister of the Queen Regent. These conspirators, by proceeding to the last extremities, and thereby making her tremble for Mazarin's life, hastened the triumph of the happy Cardinal; and on the morrow of the last nocturnal ambush in which he was marked for destruction, Jules Mazarin became absolute master of the Queen's heart, and more powerful than Richelieu had ever been after the *Day of Dupes.*

The minister's *carnets* will be searched in vain for any traces of the explanations which Mazarin must have had with the Queen during this grave conjuncture. Such explanations are not of a nature likely to be forgotten, and of which there is any need to take notes. An obscure passage, however, is to be met with, written in Spanish, of which the following words have a meaning clear enough to be understood: "I ought no longer to have any doubt, since the Queen, in an excess of goodness, has told me that nothing could deprive me of the post which she has done me the honour of giving me near her; nevertheless, as fear is the inseparable companion of affection, &c."* At this anxious moment, Mazarin was attacked with a slight illness,

* Carnet, iii. p. 45.—"Mas contodo esto siendo el temor un compagnero inseparabile dell' affection," &c.

brought on by incessant labour and wearing anxieties, and an attack of jaundice having supervened, the Cardinal jotted down the following brief but highly suggestive memorandum: — "*La giallezza cagionata dà soverchio amore.*" *

Madame de Motteville was in attendance on Anne of Austria when the rumour of the abortive attempt at assassination brought a crowd of courtiers to the Louvre in hot haste to protest their devotedness to the Crown. The Queen, with great emotion, whispered to her trusty lady-in-waiting: "Ere eight and forty hours elapse you shall see how I will avenge myself for the evil tricks these false friends have played me." "Never," adds Madame de Motteville, "can the remembrance of those few brief words be effaced from my mind. I saw at that moment, by the fire that flashed in the Queen's eyes, and in fact by what happened on that very evening and next day, what it is to be a female sovereign when enraged, and with the power of doing what she pleases." † Had the cautious lady-in-waiting been less discreet, she might have added, "especially when that sovereign lady is a woman in love."

The break-up and dispersion of the *Importants* once decided upon, the first step was to arrest Beaufort, and bring him to trial. To this the Queen gave her consent. Of the authority Mazarin had acquired, such proceeding was a striking indication, and showed how far Anne of Austria might one day go in defence of a minister who was dear to her. The Duke de Beaufort had been, before her husband's death, the man in whom the Queen placed most confidence, and for some time he was thought destined to play the brilliant part of a royal favourite. In a brief space he had effectually thrown away his chance by his pre-

* Carnet, iv. p. 3. † Mémoires, vol. i. p. 185.

sumptuous conduct, his evident incapacity, and yet more by his public *liaison* with Madame de Montbazon. Still the Queen had shown a somewhat singular weakness in his favour, and at the expiration of three short months to sign an order for his arrest was a great step—necessary, it is true, but extreme, and which was the manifest sign of an entire change in the heart and intimate relations of Anne of Austria. The dissimulation even with which she acted in that affair marks the deliberative firmness of her resolution.

The 2nd of September, 1643, was truly a memorable day in the career of Mazarin, and we may say, in the annals of France; for it witnessed the confirming of the royal power, shaken to its base by the deaths of Richelieu and Louis XIII., and the ruin of the party of the *Importants*.

On the morning of the 2nd, all Paris and its Court rang with the report of the ambuscade laid for Mazarin the night previous, between the Louvre and the Hôtel de Cleves. The five conspirators who had joined hands with Beaufort in it had taken flight and placed themselves in safety. Beaufort and Madame de Chevreuse could not imitate them: flight for them would have been a self-denunciation. The intrepid Duchess therefore had not hesitated to appear at Court, and she was at the Regent's side during the evening of the 2nd together with another person, a stranger to these dark plots and even incapable of putting faith in them—a very different enemy of Mazarin—the pious and noble Madame de Hautefort. As for the Duke, careless and courageous, he had gone to the chase in the morning, and at his return he went, according to his custom, to present his homage to the Queen. On entering the Louvre he met his mother, Madame de Vendôme, and his sister the Duchess de Nemours, who had accompanied the Queen all

day and remarked her emotion. They did all they could to prevent him going up stairs, and entreated him to absent himself for a while. He, without troubling himself in the slightest degree, answered them in the words of the doomed Duke de Guise—"They dare not!"—and entered the Queen's great cabinet, who received him with the best grace possible, and asked him all sorts of questions about his hunting, "as though," says Madame de Motteville, "she had no other thought in her mind." The Cardinal having come in in the midst of this gentle chat, the Queen rose and bade him follow her. It appeared as if she wished to take counsel with him in her chamber. She entered it, followed by her Minister. At the same time the Duke de Beaufort, about to leave, met Guitant, captain of the guard, who arrested him, and commanded the Duke to follow him in the names of the King and Queen. The Prince, without showing any surprise, after having looked fixedly at him, said, "Yes, I will; but this, I must own, is strange enough." Then turning towards Mesdames de Chevreuse and de Hautefort, who were talking together, he said to them, "Ladies, you see that the Queen has caused me to be arrested." The young nobleman then submitted to the royal mandate without offering the slightest resistance; slept that night at the Louvre, and the next morning was taken to the donjon of Vincennes, while a general decree of banishment was pronounced against all the principal members of the faction.

The Vendômes were ordered to retire to Anet; and the Chateau d'Anet having soon become what the Hôtel de Vendôme at Paris had been, a haunt of the conspirators, Mazarin demanded them from the Duke Cæsar, who took good care not to give them up. The Cardinal was almost

reduced to the necessity of laying siege to the château in regular form. He threatened to enter the place by main force and lay hands on Beaufort's accomplices; unable to endure the scandal that a prince even of the blood should brave law and justice with impunity, he had determined to push matters to the uttermost, and was about to take energetic measures, when the Duke de Vendôme himself decided on quitting France, and went to Italy to await the fall of Mazarin, as formerly he had awaited in England that of Richelieu.

The arrest of Beaufort, the dispersion of his accomplices, his friends and his family, was the first indispensable measure forced upon Mazarin to enable him to face a danger that seemed most imminent. But what would it have availed him to lop off an arm had he left the head untouched —had Madame de Chevreuse remained at Court, ever ready to surround the Queen with attention and homage, assiduous to retain and husband the last remnant of her old favour, in order to sustain and secretly encourage the malcontents, inspire them with her audacity, and stir them up to fresh conspiracies? She still held in her grasp the scarcely-severed threads of the plot; and at her right hand there was a man too wary to allow himself to be again compromised by such dark doings, but quite ready to profit by them, and whom Madame de Chevreuse had sedulously exhibited not only to Anne of Austria, but to France and all Europe, as a man singularly capable of conducting State affairs. Mazarin, therefore, did not hesitate; but on the day following Beaufort's arrest, Châteauneuf, Montrésor, and St. Ybar were banished. The first-named was invited to present himself at Court, kiss the Queen's hand, and then betake himself to his government in Touraine. Riche-

lieu's late Keeper of the Seals deemed it something to have escaped an open disgrace, to have resumed the eminent post he had formerly occupied under the Crown, and the government of a large province. Yet did his ambition soar far higher still: but he kept it in check, and merely postponed its flight for a less stormy hour—obeyed the Queen, skilfully remained friends with her, and likewise kept on very good terms with her Prime Minister—biding his time until he might displace him. He had to wait a long time, however; but eventually did not quit life without once more grasping, for a moment at least, that power which the indulgence of an insensate passion had lost him, but which an inviolable and unswerving friendship in the end restored to him.*

Madame de Chevreuse unhappily lacked the wisdom displayed throughout this fiery ordeal by Châteauneuf. She forgot for once to look with a smiling face upon the passing storm, in which she was too suddenly caught to escape altogether scatheless. La Châtre—one of her friends, and who saw her almost every day—relates that during the very same evening on which Beaufort was arrested at the Louvre, "Her Majesty told the Duchess that she believed her to be innocent of the prisoner's designs, but that nevertheless to avoid scandal she deemed it fitting that Madame de Chevreuse should quietly withdraw to Dampierre, and that after making some short sojourn there she should retire into Touraine."† The Duchess, therefore, saw plainly that she had nothing for it but to go at once to Dampierre; but no

* Châteauneuf held the seals from March, 1650, when Mazarin went into voluntary exile, until April, 1651. He died in 1653, at the age of seventy-three.

† "Allontanar Cheverosa che fà mille cabelle." Mazarin's Carnet, iii. 81, 82.

sooner did she arrive at her favourite château than, instead of remaining quiet, she began to move heaven and earth to save those who had compromised themselves for her sake. She began, indeed, to knot the meshes of a new web of intrigue, and even found means of placing a letter in the Queen's own hand. Message after message was, however, sent to hasten her departure—Montagu being despatched to her on the same errand, as was also La Porte. She received them haughtily, and deferred her journey under divers pretexts. It will be remembered that on going to meet the Duchess when on her road from Brussels, Montagu had offered her, on the Queen's part as well as that of Mazarin, to discharge in her name the debts she had contracted during so many years of exile. The Duchess had already received heavy sums, but was unwilling to set forth for Touraine until after the Queen should have performed all her promises. Marie de Rohan had left the Louvre and Paris, her bosom swelling with grief and rage, as Hannibal had quitted Italy. She felt that the Court and capital and the Queen's inner circle formed the true field of battle, and that to remove herself from it was to abandon the victory to the enemy. Her retreat, indeed, was an occasion of mourning to the entire Catholic party, as well as to the friends of peace and the Spanish alliance, but, on the contrary, of public rejoicing for the friends of the Protestant alliance. The Count d'Estrade actually went to the Louvre on the part of the Prince of Orange, from whom he was accredited, to thank the Regent officially for it.

Madame de Chevreuse made her way, therefore, to her estate of Duverger, between Tours and Angiers. The deep solitude that there reigned around her embittered all the more the feeling of defeat. She kept up, however, a

brisk correspondence with her stepmother, Madame de Montbazon—banished to Rochefort; and the two exiled Duchesses mutually exhorted each other to leave no stone unturned towards effecting the overthrow of their common enemy. Vanquished at home, Madame de Chevreuse centred all her hopes in foreign lands. She revived the friendly relations which she had never ceased to cherish with England, Spain, and the Low Countries. Her chief prop, the centre and interposer of her intrigues, was Lord Goring, our ambassador at the French Court; who, like his ill-starred master, and more especially his royal mistress, belonged to the Spanish party. Croft, an English gentleman who had figured in the train of the Duchess some years previously, bestirred himself actively and openly in her behalf, whilst the Chevalier de Jars intrigued warily and in secret for Châteauneuf. Beneath the mantle of the English embassy a vast correspondence was carried on between Madame de Chevreuse, Vendôme, Bouillon, and the rest of the *Malcontents*.

CHAPTER VI.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE QUARREL BETWEEN THE DUCHESSES DE LONGUEVILLE AND DE MONTBAZON.—FATAL DUEL BETWEEN THE DUKE DE GUISE AND COUNT MAURICE DE COLIGNY.

As has been said, the 2nd of September, 1643, had been truly a memorable day in the career of Mazarin, and, indeed, in the annals of France; for it witnessed the confirming of the royal power, shaken to its base by the deaths of Richelieu and Louis XIII., and the ruin of that dangerous faction the *Importants*. The intestine discords which threatened the new reign were thus forced to await a more favourable opportunity for development. They did not raise their heads again until five years afterwards—on the breaking out of the Fronde, in which they showed themselves just the same men as ever, with the same designs, the same politics, foreign and domestic; and after raising sanguinary and sterile commotions, re-appeared only to break themselves to pieces once more against the genius of Mazarin and the invincible firmness of Anne of Austria.

Mazarin, therefore, who soon found himself without a rival in the Queen's good graces, continued steadily to carry on within and without the realm the system of his prędecessor, and royalty, as well as France, reckoned upon a succession of halcyon years, thanks to the re-union of the Princes of the blood with the Crown, to the tactics and

personal conduct of the Prime Minister, and to his political sagacity, seconded by the military genius of the Duke d'Enghien. The imprudence of Madame de Montbazon and her lover Beaufort in the affair of the dropped letters had the effect of increasing Mazarin's power incalculably, and that at the very moment that a splendid victory gained by the young Duke d'Enghien had made him and his sister paramount at Court—paramount by a popularity so universal that it almost made the Queen and her minister their *protégés* rather than their patrons.

The Duke d'Enghien had returned to Paris after Rocroy, and at the end of a campaign in which he had taken a very important stronghold, passed the Rhine with the French army, and carried the war into Germany. The Queen had received him as the liberator of France. Mazarin, who looked more to the reality than the semblance of power, intimated to the young conqueror that his sole ambition was to be his chaplain and man of business with the Queen. At a distance, the Duke d'Enghien had praised everything that had been done, and came from the camp over head and ears in love with Madlle. du Vigean, and furious that any one should have dared to insult a member of his house. He adored his sister, and he had a warm friendship for Coligny.* He was aware of and had favoured his passion for that sister. Engaged himself in a suit as ardent as it was chaste, he readily comprehended that his beautiful sister might well have been not insensible to the fervent assiduities of the brave Maurice, but he revolted at the thought of the amatory effusions of a Madame de Fouquerolles being attributed to her, and he assumed a tone in the matter which effect-

* Grandson of the famous Admiral de Coligny, who perished in the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

ually arrested any further insinuation from even the most insolent and daring.

Amongst the especial friends of Beaufort and Madame de Montbazon, foremost of all stood the Duke de Guise.* They had manœuvred to secure him as well as the rest of his family to their party, through Gaston, Duke d'Orleans, who had espoused as his second wife a princess of the house of Lorraine—the lovely Marguerite, sister of Charles IV. and second daughter of Duke Francis. The Duke de Guise had already played many strange pranks and committed more than one folly, but he had not as yet signally failed in any serious enterprise. His incapacity was not patent. He had the prestige of his name, youth, good looks, and a courage carried even to temerity. The avowed slave of Madame de Montbazon, he had espoused her quarrel, and to gratify her had joined in propagating those calumnious reports, but without exhibiting the violence of Beaufort, and had remained erect, confronting and defying the victorious Condés.

Coligny had had the good sense to keep aloof during the storm, for fear of still further compromising Madame de Longueville by exhibiting himself openly as her champion: but a few months having elapsed, he thought that he might at last show himself, and, as a certain authority† tells us, "the imprisonment of the Duke de Beaufort having deprived that noble of the chance of measuring swords with him, he addressed himself to the Duke de Guise." La Rochefoucauld says, "the Duke d'Enghien, unable to testify to the Duke de Beaufort, who was in prison, the resentment he felt at what had passed between Madame de Longueville

* Henry, son of Charles de Guise, and grandson of the *Balafré*.

† An inedited Memoir upon the Regency.

and Mâdame de Montbazon, left Coligny at liberty to fight with the Duke de Guise, who had mixed himself up in this affair." The Duke d'Enghien, therefore, knew and approved of what Coligny did. In fact, he found himself without an adversary in the affair of sufficient rank to justify a prince of the blood in drawing his sword against him. So far as regards Madame de Longueville, it is absurd to suppose that, desirous of vengeance, she it was who had urged on Coligny, for everybody ascribed to her a line of conduct characterised by great moderation, as contrasted with that of the Princess de Condé. Far from envenoming the quarrel, she wished to hush it up, and Madame de Motteville thus significantly alludes to that fact: "The enmity she bore Madame de Montbazon being proportionate to the love she bore her husband, it did not carry her so far but that she found it more à propos to dissimulate that outrage than otherwise."

La Rochefoucauld gives some particulars which explain what follows. Coligny, just risen out of a long illness, was still very much enfeebled, and, moreover, not very "skilful of fence." Such was his condition when, as the champion of Madame de Longueville, he confronted the Duke de Guise in mortal duel, whilst the latter, like most heroes of the parade-ground, possessed rare cunning at carte and tierce. With regard to the seconds chosen, they are in every respect worthy of notice. In those days, seconds were witnesses of the duel in which they themselves fought. Coligny selected as his second, and to give the challenge, as was then the custom, Godefroi, Count d'Estrades, a man of cool and tried courage. The Duke de Guise's second was his equerry, the Marquis de Bridieu, a Limousin gentleman and brave officer, faithfully attached to the house of

Lorraine, who, in 1650, admirably defended Guise against the Spanish army and against Turenne, and for that brave defence, during which there were twenty-four days of open trenches, he was made lieutenant-general.

It was arranged that the affair should come off at the Place Royale—the usual arena for those sort of encounters, and which had been a hundred times stained with the best blood of France. The mansions around the Place Royale were then tenanted by ladies of the highest rank and fashion, amongst the rest, Marguerite, Duchess de Rohan, Madame de Guéméné, Madame de Chaulnes, Madame de St. Geran, Madame de Sablé, the Countess de St. Maure, and many others, under the influence of whose bright eyes those volatile and valiant French gentlemen delighted to cross swords. And there many a noble form had been struck down never to rise again, and many a noble heart had throbbed its last. During the first quarter of the seventeenth century, the duel was a custom at once useful and disastrous, inasmuch as it kept up the warlike spirit of the nobles, but which mowed them down as fast as war itself, and but too frequently for frivolous causes. To draw swords for trifles had become the obligatory accompaniment of good manners; and as gallantry had its finished fops, so the duel had its refined rufflers. In the comparatively short period of a few years, nine hundred gentlemen perished in these combats. To stop this scourge, Richelieu issued a royal edict, which punished death by death, and sent the offenders from the Place Royale to the Place de Grève. On this head Richelieu showed himself inflexible, and the examples of Montmorency-Bouteville, beheaded with his second, the Count Deschappelles, for having challenged Beuvron and fought with him on the Place Royale at mid-

day, impressed a salutary terror, and rendered infraction of the edict very rare. Coligny, however, braved everything; he challenged Guise, and on the appointed day the two noble adversaries, accompanied by their seconds, D'Estrades and Bridieu, met upon the Place Royale.

Of this memorable duel, thanks to contemporary memoirs as well as various kinds of MSS., the minutest details have been preserved.

On the 12th of December, 1643, D'Estrades went in the morning to call out the Duke de Guise on the part of Coligny. The rendezvous was fixed for the same day, at three o'clock in the afternoon, at the Place Royale. The two adversaries did not appear abroad during the whole morning, and at three o'clock they were on the ground. A sentence is ascribed to Guise which invests the scene with an unwonted grandeur, and arrays for the last time in bitterest animosity and deadly antagonism the two most illustrious representatives of the League wars in the persons of their descendants. On unsheathing his sword Guise said to Coligny: "We are about to decide the old feud of our two houses, and to see what a difference there is between the blood of Guise and that of Coligny."

Coligny's only reply was to deal his adversary a long lunge; but, weak as he was, his rearward foot failed him, and he sank upon his knee. Guise advanced upon him and set his foot upon his sword, in such manner as though he would have said, "I do not desire to kill you, but to treat you as you deserve, for having presumed to address yourself to a prince of such birth as mine, without his having given you just cause,"—and he struck him with the flat of his sword-blade. Coligny, furious, collected his strength, threw himself backwards, disengaged his sword, and recommenced

the strife. In this second bout, Guise was slightly wounded in the shoulder, and Coligny in the hand. At length, Guise, in making another thrust at his adversary, grasped his sword-blade, by which his hand was slightly cut, but, wresting it from Coligny's grasp, dealt him a desperate thrust in the arm which put him *hors de combat*. Meanwhile D'Estrades and Bridieu had grievously wounded each other.

Such was the issue of that memorable duel—the last, it appears, of the famous encounters on the Place Royale. We thus see that, though cowed, the French noblesse had not been tamed by Richelieu's solemn edict. This last duel did very little honour to Coligny, and almost everybody took part with the Duke de Guisé. The Queen manifested very lively displeasure at the violation of the edict, and the Duke d'Orleans, urged thereto by his wife and the Lorraine family, made a loud outcry. The Prince and Princess de Condé also found themselves compelled to declare against Coligny—doubly in the wrong, both because he had been the challenger and been unfortunate in the result. Proof that there was an understanding between Coligny and the Duke d'Enghien is evident from the latter not deserting the unlucky champion of his sister, that he received the wounded man into his house at Paris, afterwards at Saint Maur, and that he did not cease from surrounding him with his protection and care in spite of his father, the Prince de Condé. When the matter was referred to the Parliament, conformably to the edict, and the two adversaries were summoned to appear, the Duke de Guise announced his intention of repairing to the chamber with a retinue of princes and great nobles; whilst, on his side, the Duke d'Enghien threatened to escort his friend after the

same fashion. But the initiative proceedings were stayed through the deplorable condition into which poor Coligny was known to have fallen.

That unfortunate young man languished for some months, and died in the latter part of May, 1644, alike in consequence of his wounds and of despair for having so badly sustained the cause of his own house, as well as that of Madame de Longueville.

This affair, with all its dramatic features and tragical termination, created an immense and painful impression not only in Paris, but throughout France. It momentarily awakened party feelings which had for some time slumbered, and suspended the festivals of the winter of 1644. It not only occupied the families more closely concerned and the Court, but forcibly affected the whole of the highest class of society, and long remained the absorbing topic of every saloon. It may be readily conceived that the story in spreading thus widely became enlarged with imaginary incidents one after another. At first, it was supposed that Madame de Longueville was in love with Coligny. That was necessary to give the greater interest to the narrative. From thence came the next invention, that she herself had armed Coligny's hand, and that D'Estrades, charged to challenge the Duke de Guise, having remarked to Coligny that the Duke might probably repudiate the injurious words attributed to him, and that honour would thus be satisfied, Coligny had thereupon replied: "That is not the question. I pledged my word to Madame de Longueville to fight him on the Place Royale, and I cannot fail in that promise." * There was no stopping a cavalier in such a chivalrous course as that, and Madame de Longueville would not have been the

* Mad. de Motteville.

sister of the victor of Rocroy—a heroine worthy of sustaining comparison with those of Spain, who beheld their lovers die at their feet in the tournament—had she not been present at the duel between Guise and Coligny. It is asserted, therefore, that on the 12th of December she was stationed in an hôtel on the Place Royale belonging to the Duchess de Rohan, and that there, concealed behind a window-curtain, she had witnessed the discomfiture of her *preux chevalier.*

Then, as now, it was verse—that is to say, the ballad—which set its seal on the popular incident of the moment. When the event was an unlucky one, the song was a burlesquely pathetic complaint, and always with a vein of raillery running through it. Such was the effusion with which every *ruelle* rang, and it was really set to music, for the notation is still to be found in the *Recueil de Chansons notées,* preserved at the Arsenal at Paris. It ran thus :—

"Essuyez vos beaux yeux,
Madame de Longueville,
Coligny se porte mieux.
S'il a demandé la vie,
Ne l'en blâmez nullement ;
Car c'est pour être votre amant
Qu'il veut vivre éternellement."

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

THE DUCHESS DE LONGUEVILLE AND THE DUKE DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULD.

THAT Madame de Longueville witnessed the duel on the Place Royale seems to rest on no reliable authority. Such a trait is so utterly at variance with her character that its attribution would impute to her the manners of a semi-Italianised princess of the Valois race. There are besides no sufficient grounds for believing that her affections had for a moment been given to Coligny, though doubtless her innate tenderness must have been touched by his chivalrous love and devotion. Miossens, afterwards better known as Marshal d'Albret, next tried in vain to win a heart which had hitherto appeared insensible to the master-passion, but after an obstinate persistence was ultimately constrained to relinquish all hope. When, in 1645, M. de Longueville went as minister-plenipotentiary to the Congress of Münster, the young Duchess remained in Paris, her element being still the social sphere of the Court solely—a taste for political life not having yet been developed through the impulse of her affections. Let us here add that, notwithstanding the almost unanimous assertion of contemporaries at this period that even women could not behold Madame de Longueville without admiration, the heart of this pre-eminently gifted creature seems amidst the universal homage to have been proof against all and every repeated assault.

Anne of Austria loved her but little, partly through a jealous feeling created by her singular beauty, partly from her great reputation for wit, and also from her perpetual wranglings for precedence with other princesses of the blood. In fact, in order to lose no tittle of the prerogatives derived from her birth, Madame de Longueville had obtained a royal brevet from the king which maintained her in the rank which she would have otherwise lost by her marriage. A pride so exacting does not appear to agree with the peculiar nonchalance that was one of her striking characteristics; but, later in life, when she had become devout and penitent, she took care to explain that seeming contradiction. "I have been defined," said she, "as having, as it were, two individualities of opposite nature in me, and that I could interchange them at any moment; but that arose from the different situations in which I was placed, for I was dead, like unto the dead, to aught which slightly affected me, and keenly alive to the smallest things which interested me." Reading and study were never among the things which stirred her into animation. Entirely occupied with her fascinations and individual sentiments, at no period of her life did she ever think of repairing the early neglect of her education. In this respect she was inferior, on the authority even of her apologists, to many ladies of the Court and city. Intoxicated as she had been by the fumes of the incense which flattery had wafted around her in the circle of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, she probably had no perception of her failings on that essential point. The spontaneity of her wit, her natural aptitude to comprehend and decide upon all sorts of questions, made up for her deficiency in that kind of information which is acquired from books and other modes of study, and often stood her in good stead, both on

the part of her detractors and of her partisans, of the lofty characteristics of "great genius." M. Cousin, who is by no means severe as regards the errors or demerits of the Duchess, says that "she did not know how to write." Mademoiselle de Montpensier and Madame de Motteville, however, both express the very opposite opinion. The first remarks, speaking of the Countess de Maure:—"The precision and the polish of her style would be incomparable if Madame de Longueville had never written:" The second declares that "this lady has ever written as well as any one living." The fact is, so far as may be judged from those of her letters which have come down to us, that Madame de Longueville's style bore the reflex of her conversation: there are some passages very remarkable in their force, some phrases altogether trite and insignificant. This opinion is quite beside the consideration of her diction in a grammatical point of view. In her written as in her spoken language, she seems to have been impassive or to have kindled into animation according as her thoughts were "dead or living," to use her own phrase. Speaking and writing, however, are two very different things, both requiring an especial cultivation; and as Madame de Longueville was defective in anything like what is termed "regular education" or "sound instruction," that fact became apparent so soon as she took her pen in hand. Her great natural endowments shone on paper with difficulty, through faults of every kind which escaped her notice. It is really no small gift to be able to express one's sentiments and ideas in their natural order, and with all their true and various shades, in terms neither too homely nor far-fetched, or which neither enfeeble nor exaggerate them. It is by no means rare to meet with men in society

remarkable for intelligence, nerve, and grace when they speak, but who become unintelligible when they commit their thoughts to writing. The fact is, that writing is an art—a very difficult art, and one which must be carefully learned. Madame de Longueville was ignorant of this, as were some of the most eminent women of her time. There exists unquestionable evidence to prove that the Princess Palatine was a person of large intelligence, who was able to hold her own with men of the greatest capacity. De Retz and Bossuet tell us so. Some letters of the Palatine, however, are extant in which, whilst there is no lack of solidity, refinement, and ingenuity of thought, it will be seen that they often abound with errors, obscure phraseology, and not unfrequently outrageously violate even the commonest rules of orthography. It must not, however, by any means be inferred from this that the Palatine had not a mind of the first order, but only that she had not been trained to render clearly and fittingly her ideas and sentiments in writing. Madame de Longueville had been no better taught. Therefore all that has been said about her on this score must be restricted, alike as to the defects of her education and the brilliancy of her genius. With those Frenchwomen who have written at once largely and loosely, it is pleasant to contrast their contemporaries, Madame de Sévigné and Madame la Fayette, both of whom always wrote well.

In the first place, these two admirable ladies had received quite another sort of education to that of Madame de Longueville. They had had the advantage of being instructed by men of letters skilled in the art of teaching. Ménage was the chief instructor both of Mademoiselle de Rabutin and Mademoiselle de Lavergne—to call those accomplished letter-writers by their maiden names. Ménage trained them

carefully in composition, correcting rigidly their themes, pointing out their errors, cultivating their happy instincts, and modelling and polishing their vein and style. That talented tutor appears also to have been their platonic adorer—more platonic indeed than he desired. In his verses he celebrated by turns *la formosissima Laverna* and *la bellissima Marchesa di Sevigni*, and his lessons were doubtless given *con amore*.

Nature had been lavish indeed in all her gifts to the latter, giving her a precision and solidity allied to an inexhaustible playfulness and sparkling vivacity. Art, in her, wedded to genius, resulted in that incomparable epistolary style which left Balzac and Voiture far away behind her, and which Voltaire himself even has not surpassed.

We must now speak of him who was destined to bias, sway, and finally determine the future course of Madame de Longueville's life through the conquest of her heart and mind—La Rochefoucauld—the man who induced her to embark with him on the stormy sea of politics, whose irresistible tide swept her past the landmarks of loyalty and reputability to make shipwreck, amongst the rocks and shoals of civil war, of fame, fortune, and domestic happiness.

Up to the moment of her appearance on the scene of party strife in connection with La Rochefoucauld, Madame de Longueville had not achieved much *political* notoriety. Neither had her fair fame been compromised by the very insignificant gallantry of a long train of court danglers, nor through her involuntary participation in the affair of the letters with Madame de Montbazon. She could scarcely fail to be touched by the devotion of Coligny, who had shed his blood to avenge her of the outrage of that vindictive woman. For a moment, it is true, she had

listened carelessly and harmlessly to the attention of the brave and intellectual Miossens. Still later she compromised herself somewhat with the Duke de Nemours; but the only man she truly loved with heart and soul was La Rochefoucauld. To him she devoted herself wholly; for him she sacrificed everything—duty, interest, repose, reputation. For him she staked her fortune and her life. Through him she exhibited the most equivocal and most contradictory conduct. It was La Rochefoucauld who caused her to take part in the Fronde; who, as he willed, made her advance or recede; who united her to, or separated her from, her family; who governed her absolutely. In a word, she consented to be in his hand merely an heroic instrument. Pride and passion had doubtless something to do with this life of adventure and that contempt of peril. But of what stamp must have been that soul which could find consolation in all this? And, as often happens, the man to whom she thus devoted herself was not wholly worthy of her. He had infinite spirit; but he was coldly calculating; profoundly selfish, meanly ambitious. He measured others by himself. He was naturally as subtle in evil, as she was disposed spontaneously to virtue. Full of finesse in his self-love and in the pursuit of his own interest, he was, in reality, the least chivalrous of his sex, although he affected all the appearance of the loftiest chivalry. In his *liaison* with Madame de Longueville he made love the slave of ambition.

It will be necessary to touch only slightly upon his career antecedent to this period. Francis, the sixth seigneur and second Duke de la Rochefoucauld, was born 15th December 1613. Little is recorded of his early years, he himself having given no details about them. We only know that

he was very imperfectly educated, his father being desirous that he should early adopt the profession of arms. Himself enjoying royal favour in the highest degree, his eldest son, the young Prince de Marsillac, profitably felt its influence; for, as early as 1626, he commanded as *mestre-de-camp* the Auvergne regiment of cavalry at the siege of Casal. He took an active part in the *Day of Dupes*, the period at which his memoirs commence. Two years previously, in 1628, he had married at Mirebeau a rich and beautiful heiress of Burgundy, Andrée de Vivonne, only daughter of André de Vivonne, Baron of Berandière and Chasteigneraye, Grand Falconer of France, Captain in the Guards of the Queen-Mother, Marie de' Medici, Councillor of State, and one of the most trusty followers of Henry IV. The Prince de Marsillac was at first in great favour at Court, notwithstanding his father's misconduct, but he suddenly compromised himself in a very imprudent way. Closely intimate with that virtuous maid-of-honour, Marie de Hautefort, whom the saturnine Louis XIII. loved as passionately as his peculiar temperament permitted, and also with Mademoiselle de Chémerault, as lovely as she was witty, he was by them hurried into a blind devotion to the cause of their unhappy mistress and queen, Anne of Austria, "the only party," says he, with unusual candour, "that I ever honestly followed." And very soon his confidential relations with the persecuted princess became so marked as necessarily to excite Richelieu's suspicions, the more so that he ventured to speak of the Cardinal's administration in the boldest terms. His friends advised him to retire from Court, at least temporarily; but, as he wished to employ his time usefully, he joined as a volunteer the army of Marshal de Chastillon, who, with Marshal de la Meilleraye, beat Prince

Thomas of Savoy at Avein. After behaving with distinction there, he returned, when the campaign was over, to Court, exhibiting a conduct still more independent, and which resulted in forcing him to rejoin his father at Blois.

It was through the proximity of his father's château of Verteuil to Poitiers, where the Duchess de Chevreuse was then living in banishment from Court, that the Prince de Marsillac first came to ally himself with the illustrious political adventuress. At the time when La Rochefoucauld obtained political notoriety, a crisis occurred in France in national manners, sentiments, and feelings. The nobles, long kept under by the strong hand of Richelieu, were again rising into faction, and a spirit of intrigue had seized upon everyone.

Although still young, Rochefoucauld had renounced enterprises in which the heart is alone concerned. No longer engrossed with love, he was wholly given up to ambition; and in order to avenge himself of the Queen and Mazarin, who had not in his opinion evinced sufficient generosity towards him to satisfy this later passion, he did not hesitate to fling himself headlong into partisan intrigue and strife which ended in civil war. To render himself the more formidable, he was above all desirous of securing to his party the master-mind of Condé; and as Madame de Longueville enjoyed the entire confidence of her favourite brother, and had great influence with him, the natural result was that in due course La Rochefoucauld made persistent love to the lovely Duchess. Seduced by the chivalrous manners and romantic antecedents of his youth, and yielding partly to the occasion, partly to the obstinate persistence of the suit, and some little perhaps to the maternal blood in her veins, Madame de Longueville at

length surrendered her heart to the daring aspirant. She could no longer plead early youth as an excuse, for she had already numbered twenty-nine summers, and was only distant by a very small span from that formidable epoch in woman's life which a discriminating writer of the present day has happily termed the *crisis*. That turning point in the Duchess's career was destined to prove fatal to her, and the crisis was exactly such as that of which, in the case of another celebrated woman, M. Feillet has given a lucid analysis—the crisis brought about by an irresistible passion. Let us beware of hastily applying to Madame de Longueville that maxim of her cynical lover: "Women often think they still love him whom they no longer really love. The opportunity of an intrigue, the mental emotion to which gallantry gives birth, natural inclination to the pleasure of being beloved, and the pain of refusing the lover, together persuade them that they cherish a genuine passion when it is nothing more than mere coquetry." Better had it been both for herself and for us to believe that she had only so loved.

The beauty and intelligence of the Duchess de Longueville formed certainly, at the commencement, a large share in the calculating lover's determination to seek a *liaison* with the Duke d'Enghien's sister. The crowd of admirers was great around her, and that spectacle of itself served to inflame the ambition of M. de Marsillac: subsequent reflection, doubtless, must have redoubled his ardour to achieve the twofold conquest, in love and party. The Count de Miossens was then paying the most assiduous court to Madame de Longueville; he was very intimately connected with Marsillac, to whom indeed he was nearly

related, and whom he kept well acquainted with the course of his amours. His suit to the lovely Duchess proving, as has been said, entirely unsuccessful, Miossens eventually left the field clear to Marsillac, the brave and simple soldier giving place to the self-seeking man of the world..

CHAPTER II.

THE DUCHESS DE LONGUEVILLE DRAWN INTO THE VORTEX OF POLITICS AND CIVIL WAR BY HER LOVE FOR LA ROCHEFOUCAULD.

WE have glanced rapidly over the fairest period of Madame de Longueville's youth, over those years wherein the splendour of her success in the ranks of fashion was not obtained at the expense of her virtue. The time approaches in which she is about to yield to the manners of her age, and to the long-combatted wants of her heart. The love which she inspired in others, she is, in turn, about to feel herself, and it is to engage her, at the age of twenty-eight or twenty-nine, in a fatal connection, which will make her unmindful of all her conjugal duties, and turn her most brilliant qualities against herself, against her family, and against France.

Let us now relate briefly what we know of Madame de Longueville from the moment of our last mention of her up to the commencement of 1648. There is nothing recorded which can authorise the supposition that before the close of 1647 Madame de Longueville had ever passed the limits of that noble and graceful gallantry which she saw everywhere held in honour, the praises of which she heard celebrated at the Hôtel de Rambouillet as well as at the Hôtel de Condé, in the great verse of Corneille and in the turgid effusions of Voiture. At the time of the duel between Guise and

Coligny, in 1644, she had seen her twenty-fifth summer. Each succeeding year seemed only to enhance the power of her charms, and that power she delighted in exhibiting. A thousand adorers pressed around her. Coligny was, perhaps, nearest to her heart, but had not, however, touched it. But one cannot, with impunity, trifle with love. That tragic adventure of the eldest of the Châtillons perishing, in the flower of his youth, by the hand of the eldest of the Guises was quickly echoed by song and romance through every *salon*, and cast a gloom upon the destiny of Madame de Longueville, and gave her, at an early period, a fame at once aristocratic and popular, which prepared her wonderfully to play a great part in that other tragi-comedy, heroic and gallant, called the Fronde. The glory of her brother was reflected upon her, and she responded to it somewhat by her own success at Court and in the *salons*. She acquired more and more the manners of the times. Coquetry and witty talk formed her sole occupation. Her delicate condition not permitting her to accompany M. de Longueville to Münster, in June, 1645, she remained in Paris. It was the place above all others in which she delighted, and whether her heart had received some slight wound, or whether it was still entirely whole, it is clear that she was not very glad nor greatly charmed to find herself, after her accouchement in the spring of 1646, under the cold, grey sky of Westphalia, again beside a husband who was not, as Retz says, the most agreeable man to her in the world. It is not difficult to divine the feelings with which that petted beauty of the Hôtel de Rambouillet must have left Corneille, Voiture, and all the elegancies and refinements of life, to take up her abode at Munster amongst a set of foreign diplomatists only speaking German or Latin. To her it was doubly an

exile, for her native soil was not merely France—but Paris, the Court, the Hôtel de Condé, Chantilly, the Place Royale, the Rue St. Thomas du Louvre.* However, there was nothing for it but to obey the marital summons, and to set off with her step-daughter, Mademoiselle de Longueville, who was already more than twenty years of age. The Duchess quitted Paris on the 20th of June, 1646, with a numerous escort under the command of Montigny, lieutenant of M. de Longueville's guards. The entire journey from Paris to Munster was a continual ovation. The Duke went as far as Wesel to meet her. Turenne, who then commanded on the Rhine, treated her to the spectacle of an army drawn up in order of battle, and which he manœuvred for her amusement. Was it on that occasion that the great captain, well known to have been always impressionable to female beauty, received the ardent impulse which was renewed at Stenay in 1650, and which, graciously but prudently acknowledged by Madame de Longueville, always remained a close and tender tie between them? On the 22nd of July she made her triumphal entry into Munster. During the entire autumn of 1646 and the winter of 1647 she was really the Queen of the Congress. Her beauty and grace of manner won homage equally from the grave diplomatists as from the great commanders who were there assembled.

Although the Duchess dissembled her ennui with that politeness and gentleness peculiar to herself, after the lapse of a few months she had had enough of her brilliant exile. In the winter of 1647 there were two reasons for her return to France. Her father, the Prince de Condé, had died towards the close of December, 1646, to the great loss of

* In which the Hôtel de Rambouillet was situate.

his family and France, the consequences of which were somewhat later vividly felt. Moreover, Madame de Longueville had become *enceinte* at Münster for the third time, and it being her mother's wish that her accouchement should take place near her, M. de Longueville was compelled to consent to his wife's departure for Paris.

Her return to France, at first to Chantilly, and next to Paris, in the month of May, 1647, was quite another sort of triumph to that of her journey to the Rhine and Holland, and her sojourn at Münster. She found the crowd of her adorers more numerous and attentive than ever, and in the foremost rank her younger brother, the Prince de Conti, just fresh from college, was taking his first lessons of life in the wider range of the great world.

Shortly after her accouchement, the Duchess, who during her sojourn amongst the plenipotentiaries charged with negotiating the treaty of Westphalia, had acquired a taste, there seems little doubt, for political discussions and speculations, first began to manifest an inclination to mix herself up with state affairs. There was little difficulty in her doing so. The mission which the Duke de Longueville continued to fulfil in Germany, the continued favour enjoyed by the Princess de Condé, the ever-increasing influence which the Duke d'Enghien—recently through his father's death become Prince de Condé—had acquired by his repeated victories, all these advantages, joined to the prestige of the personal charms of Madame de Longueville, placed this latter in a position to take the foremost part in the civil war about to break out.

The Court and Paris were then occupied with festivals and diversions, which all were eager to share with Madame de Longueville. To please the Queen, Mazarin multiplied

balls and operas. At a great expense he sent to Italy for artists, singers, male and female, who represented the opera of *Orpheus*, the machinery and decorations of which are said to have cost more than 400,000 livres. The Queen delighted in these spectacles. France also, as though inspired by its increasing grandeur, took pleasure in the magnificence of its government, and seconded it by redoubling its own luxury and magnificence. The pleasures of wit occupied the first rank. The Hôtel de Rambouillet, near its decline, was shedding its last rays. Madame de Longueville reigned there as well as in all the best circles of Paris; and it must be confessed, with her good qualities she had also some of the defects of the best *précieuses*. The following is the picture which Madame de Motteville has traced of her person, of the turn of her mind, of her occupation, of her reputation, and of that of the whole house of Condé, at this period, which may be considered as the most felicitous of her life: "This princess, who during her absence reigned in her family, and whose approbation was sought as though she were a real sovereign, did not fail, on her return to Paris, to appear in greater splendour than when she left it. The friendship entertained for her by the Prince, her brother, authorizing her actions and her manners, the greatness of her beauty and of her mind increased so much the cabal of her family, that she was not long at Court without almost entirely engrossing it. She became the object of all desires: her clique was the centre of all intrigues, and those whom she loved became also the favourites of fortune. . . . Her intelligence, her wit, and the high opinion entertained for her discernment, won for her the admiration of all good people, who were persuaded that her esteem alone was enough to give them reputation. If, in

this way, she governed people's minds, she was not less successful by means of her beauty; for although she had suffered from the small-pox since the Regency, and although she had lost somewhat of the perfection of her complexion, the splendour of her charms excited a powerful influence upon those who saw her; and she possessed especially, in the highest degree, what in the Spanish language is expressed by those words, *donayre, brio, y bizarrie* (gallant air). She had an admirable form, and her person possessed a charm whose power extended over our own sex. It was impossible to see her without loving her, and without desiring to please her." Some shadows, however, slightly tone down this otherwise brilliant portraiture. "She was then too much engrossed with her own sentiments, which passed for infallible rules while they were not always so, and there was too much affectation in her manner of speaking and acting, whose greatest beauty was attributable to delicacy of thought and correctness of reasoning. She appeared constrained, and the keen raillery exercised by herself and her courtiers often fell upon those who, while rendering her their homage, felt, to their mortification, that honest sincerity, which ought to be observed in polite society, was apparently banished from hers. The virtues and qualities of the most excellent creatures are mingled with things opposed to them: all men partake of this clay from which they derive their origin, and God alone is perfect. . . . In short it may be said that at this time all greatness, all glory, and all gallantry were concentrated in the family of Bourbon, of which the Prince de Condé was the illustrious head, and that fortune was not considered a desirable thing if it did not emanate from their hands."

But, unhappily, frivolous pastimes, of a nature both inno-

cent and dangerous, now wholly engrossed Madame de Longueville. She was surrounded by all the prosperities and all the felicities of this life. Everything conspired in her favour, or rather against her—the triumphs of mind as well as those of beauty, the continually increasing glory of her paternal house, the intoxication of her vanity, the secret promptings of her heart. The trial was too much for her, and she succumbed to it. In the enchanted circle in which she moved, more than one adorer attracted her attention; and one of them succeeded in winning her affections, according to all appearances, at the close of 1647, or at the commencement of 1648. She was then about twenty-nine.

François, Prince de Marsillac, without being very handsome, was well formed and very agreeable. As De Retz says, he was not a warrior, although he was a very good soldier. What distinguished him especially was his wit. Of this he possessed an infinite fund, of the finest and most delicate. His conversation was gentle, easy, insinuating; and his manners were at once the most natural and most polished. He had a lofty air. In him vanity supplied the place of ambition. At an early age he showed a fondness for distinction and for intrigues. Profoundly selfish, and having succeeded in acquiring a knowledge of himself, and in reducing to theory his nature, his character, and his tastes, he set out with very contrary appearances, and those chivalrous manners affected by the *Importants*. One of his first connections, as we have seen, was with Madame de Chevreuse, who secured him to Queen Anne. When the death of Louis XIII. had placed the supreme authority in her hands, he imagined that his fortune was made. He sought successively various important offices which the Queen could not grant, whatever liking she might have

entertained for him. Having tried several schemes and failed in all, the Queen applied herself to soothing his disappointments, by behaviour so tender as to retain him, as would now be said, in a moderate opposition, and keep him from taking part in the violence of Beaufort. He was not then covered with the disgrace of the *Importants*, though he shared it to a certain extent; and he did not cease to be, or seem to be, very much attached, not to the government, but to the person of the Queen. He looked continually for some great favour at her hands. These favours not arriving, he determined to procure through intimidation what his self-seeking fidelity had not been able to secure for him.

It was during this state of his feelings that he met Madame de Longueville, on her return from Munster, surrounded by the most earnest admirers. The Count de Miossens, afterwards Marshal d'Albret—handsome, brave, full of wit and talent, as enterprising in love as in war—was paying her a very zealous court. La Rochefoucauld persuaded Miossens, who was one of his friends, that, after all, if he should overcome the resistance of Madame de Longueville, it would only be a victory flattering to his vanity, whilst that he, La Rochefoucauld, would be able to turn it to a very good account. This was certainly a very convincing and heroic reason for falling in love! We, however, do no more than transfer, with the utmost exactness, a statement made by Rochefoucauld himself, which we will now quote word for word: "So much unprofitable labour and so much weariness, finally gave me other thoughts, and led me to attempt dangerous ways in order to testify my hostility to the Queen and Cardinal Mazarin. The beauty of Madame de Longueville, her wit, and the charms of her person, attached to her all who could hope for her favour. Many

men and women of quality strove to please her; and besides all this, Madame de Longueville was then upon such good terms with all her house, and so tenderly beloved by the Duke d'Enghien, her brother, that the esteem and friendship of this prince might be counted upon by any one who enjoyed the favour of his sister. Many persons vainly attempted this game, mingling other sentiments with those of ambition. Miossens, who afterwards became Marshal of France, persisted in it longest, but with similar success. I was one of his intimate friends, and he told me his designs. They soon fell to the ground of themselves. He saw this, and told me several times that he was about to renounce them; but vanity, which was the strongest of his passions, prevented him from telling me the truth, and he professed to entertain hopes which he had not, and which I knew that he could not have. Some time passed in this way; and, finally, I had reason to believe that I could make a more considerable use than Miossens of the friendship and confidence of Madame de Longueville. I made him believe it himself. He knew my position at Court; I told him my views, declaring that my consideration for him would always restrain me, and that I would not attempt to form a connection with Madame de Longueville without his permission. I will even confess that I irritated him against her in order to obtain it, without, however, saying anything untrue. He delivered her over entirely to me, but he repented when he saw the result of that connection." *

When, subdued at length by the passion shown for her by La Rochefoucauld, Madame de Longueville had determined to respond to it, she gave herself up to him wholly—devoting herself in everything to the man whom she dared to love.

* Petitot Collection, vol. li. p. 393.

She made it a point of honour, as doubtless it was a secret happiness, to share his destiny and to follow him without casting one backward glance—sacrificing to him all her private interests, the evident interest of her family, and the strongest sentiment of her soul, her tenderness for her brother Condé.

The truthful Madame de Motteville, after noting the principal motive which urged La Rochefoucauld in his pursuit of Madame de Longueville, adds: "In all that she has since done, it is clearly seen that ambition was not the only thing that occupied her soul, and that the interests of the Prince de Marsillac there held a prominent place. For him she became ambitious, for him she ceased to love repose; and in order to show herself alive to this affection, she became too insensible to her own fame. . . . . The declarations of the Prince de Marsillac, as I have already said, had not been displeasing to her; and this nobleman, who was perhaps more selfish than tender, wishing through her to promote his own interests, believed that he should inspire her with a desire of ruling the princes her brothers."*

Such being the sordid motives of her wooer, the oft-repeated lines, therefore, which he wrote with his own hand behind a portrait of the Duchess must be construed with a considerable abatement of their poetic ardour:—

"Pour meriter son cœur, pour plaire à ses beaux yeux,
J'ai fait la guerre aux rois, Je l'aurais faite aux dieux."†

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* Mad. de Motteville, vol. ii. p. 17.

† At a later period, after he had lost his sight from a pistol-shot received at the combat of the Porte St. Antoine during the Fronde, and had quarrelled with the Duchess, he parodied his own distich,—

"Pour ce cœur inconstant, qu'enfin Je connais mieux,
J'ai fait la guerre au roi; J'en ai perdu les yeux."

Such a dissembler then was the coldly ambitious, egotistical, clever Duke de la Rochefoucauld—a man capable of sacrificing everybody to his own interests. Madame de Longueville, such as we have depicted her, could not help being the instrument of a man of like character. M. Cousin seems to have arrived at that conclusion, since, in designating that princess as *the soul of the Fronde*, he acknowledges "that she troubled the state and her own family by an extravagant passion for one of the chiefs of the *Importants*, become one of the chiefs of the Fronde." But M. Cousin is very nearly silent touching the Prince de Conti, of whom the Duchess was the sole motive-power on all occasions, and he merely says that this young prince submitted to be led by his sister in order to stand upon an equal footing with his elder brother whilst waiting for a cardinal's hat.

Armand de Bourbon, Prince de Conti, born in 1629, was eighteen years of age in 1647. He had good intellect and a not unpleasant countenance; but a slight deformity and a certain feebleness of constitution rendering him unfit for the army, he was early destined for the church. He had studied among the Jesuits at the college of Clermont with Molière, and his father had obtained for him the richest benefices, and demanded a cardinal's hat. While waiting for this hat dignity, Armand de Bourbon was living at the Hôtel de Condé, partly an ecclesiastic, partly a man of the world, passing his days with wits and men of fashion, and greedy of every species of success. The glory of his brother filled him with emulation, and he dreamed himself of warlike exploits. When his sister returned from Germany, he went to meet her, and, dazzled by her beauty, her grace, and her fame, he began to love her rather as a gallant than as a brother. He followed her blindly in all

her adventures, in which he exhibited as much courage as volatility. When he had made his peace with the Court—thanks to his marriage with a niece of Mazarin, the beautiful and virtuous Anne-Marie Martinozzi—he obtained the command-in-chiefship of the army of Catalonia, in which capacity he acquitted himself with great honour. He was much less successful in Italy. On the whole, he was far from injuring his name, and he gave to France, in the person of his young son, a true warrior, one of the best pupils of Condé, one of the last eminent generals of the seventeenth century. Constrained, through ill-health, to betake himself again to religion, the Prince de Conti finished, where he had begun, with theology. He composed several meritorious and learned works on various religious subjects.

In 1647, he was entirely devoted to vanity and pleasure. He adored his sister, and she exercised over him a somewhat ridiculous empire, which continued during several years.

CHAPTER III.

THE DUCHESS DE CHEVREUSE DRIVEN INTO EXILE FOR THE THIRD TIME.

When in the summer of 1644, the Queen of England, the fugitive consort of Charles I., sought an asylum in France from the fury of the English parliamentarians, and went to drink the Bourbon waters, Madame de Chevreuse eagerly desired to see once more that illustrious princess, who had so warmly welcomed her when herself an exile, at the Court of St. James's. Queen Henrietta, too, who like her mother, Marie de' Medici, as well as the Duchess, was of the Spanish and Catholic party, would have been delighted to have mingled her tears with those of so old and faithful a friend. But the royal exile did not deem it right to give way to her inclination without Queen Anne's permission, who at that moment was according her such noble hospitality. Anne of Austria politely replied that the Queen, her sister, was perfectly free to act as she chose; but it was intimated to her, through the Chevalier de Jars, that it was inexpedient to receive the visit of a person who, through misguided conduct, had forfeited Her Majesty's favour. This fresh disgrace, added to so many others, increased the Duchess's irritation to the highest pitch. She redoubled her efforts to break the yoke that oppressed her. Mazarin watched and was made acquainted with all her manœuvres. He had the comptroller of her household

arrested in Paris, and shortly afterwards even her physician, whilst accompanying Madame de Chevreuse's daughter in her carriage for an airing. The Duchess complained bitterly of this latter proceeding in a letter which she contrived to have handed to the Queen. She asserted that Mademoiselle de Chevreuse was forced to quit the vehicle, two archers levelling their pistols at her breast, and shouting all the while—"Fire! fire!" and they threatened, after the same fashion, the female attendants who were with her. At the same time that she protested her own innocence, she did not fail to challenge Anne's sense of justice, with a view to neutralize the enmity of Mazarin. But the physician whom he had had arrested, on being flung into the Bastile, made avowals which opened up traces of very grave matters; and an exempt of the King's guards was despatched to Madame de Chevreuse with an order commanding her to retire to Angoulême, and the officer was even charged to convey her thither. At Angoulême was that strong fortress used as a state prison, in which her friend Châteauneuf had been confined on her account for ten long years. This reminiscence, ever present to the Duchess's imagination, terrified her sorely. She dreaded lest it should be the same sort of *retreat* which they now intended for her; and the active-minded woman, preferring every kind of extremity to being imprisoned, decided upon renewing the career of a wanderer and an adventurer, as in 1637, and to tread for the third time the wearisome paths of exile.

But how greatly were circumstances then changed around her, and how changed was she also herself! Her first exile from France in 1626, had proved one continuous triumph. Young, lovely, and adored by every one, she had quitted Nancy, leaving the Duke de Lorraine a slave henceforward

to the sway of her charms, only to return to Paris and trouble the mind of the stony, impassive Richelieu. In 1637 her flight into Spain had, on the contrary, proved a most severe trial to her. She had been forced to traverse the whole of France disguised in male attire, brave more than one danger, endure much suffering and privation, only to struggle in the sequel with five consecutive years of fruitless agitation. But, at any rate, she then had youth to back her, and the consciousness of the power of that irresistible fascination which procured her adorers and suitors wherever she wandered, even among the occupants of thrones. She had faith likewise in the Queen's friendship, and a firm reliance that the time would come when that friendship would repay her for all her devotedness. But now age she felt was creeping upon her; her beauty, verging towards its decline, promised her henceforward conquests only few and far between. She perceived that in losing her power over Anne of Austria's heart, she had lost the greater portion of her prestige both in France and Europe. The flight of the Duke de Vendôme, shortly about to be followed by that of the Duke de Bouillon, left the *Importants* without any chief of note. The Duchess had found Mazarin to be quite as skilful and formidable an enemy as Richelieu. Victory seemed to have entered into a compact with him. De Bouillon's own brother, Turenne, solicited the honour of serving him, and the young Duke d'Enghien won battle after battle for him. She knew also that the Cardinal had that in his hands wherewith he could condemn and sentence her to incarceration for the rest of her days. When, however, almost every one forsook her, this extraordinary woman did not give way to self-abandonment. As soon as the exempt Riquetti had signified to her the order of which

he was the bearer, she adopted measures with her accustomed promptitude, and, accompanied by her daughter Charlotte, who had hastened to her mother and refused to quit her, she succeeded in reaching by cross-roads the thickets of La Vendée and the solitudes of Brittany; until, approaching within a few leagues of St.-Malo, she solicited an asylum at the hands of the Marquis de Coetquen. That noble and generous Breton gave her the hospitality which was due to such a woman struggling against such adversity. Marie de Rohan did not abuse it; and after placing her jewels in his hands for safety, as she had formerly done in those of La Rochefoucauld,* she embarked with her daughter in the depth of winter at St.-Malo, on board a small vessel bound for Dartmouth, whence she purposed crossing over to Dunkirk and entering Flanders. But the English parliamentarian men-of-war were cruising in the Channel. They fell in with and captured the wretched little bark, and carried her into the Isle of Wight. There Madame de Chevreuse was recognised; and as she was known to be a friend of the Queen of England, the Roundheads were not loth to subject her to sufficiently rough treatment, and afterwards hand her over to Mazarin. For-

* Subsequently, she requested the Marquis de Coetquen to hand over her jewels to Montrésor, who transferred them to a messenger of the Duchess. But Mazarin was informed of everything from first to last. He was aware of every tittle of the Duchess's correspondence, and tried to seize with the strong hand the famous gems which had formerly belonged to Marie de' Medicis' favourite foster-sister, Leonora Galligaï, created Marchioness d'Ancre. On the murder of the Marshal d'Ancre, these diamonds and *varures*, valued at two hundred thousand crowns, with a vast amount of other property confiscated by an edict of Louis XIII., were bestowed by the king on his lucky favourite, De Luynes, the first husband of Marie de Rohan. Failing in his attempt to possess himself of these costly gems, Mazarin arrested Montrésor, and kept him upwards of a year in prison. See "Memoirs of Montrésor."

tunately, in the Governor of the Isle of Wight, she met with the Earl of Pembroke, whom she had formerly known. The Duchess appealed to his courtesy,* and thanks to his good offices, she obtained—but with no little difficulty—passports which permitted her to gain Dunkirk, and thence the Spanish Low Countries.

The adventurous exile took up her abode for a short time at Liège, and applied herself to maintain and consolidate to the utmost degree possible between Spain, Austria, and the Duke de Lorraine, an alliance, which was the final resource of the *Importants*, and the last basis of her own political reputation and high standing. Mazarin, however, having got the upper hand, resumed all Richelieu's designs, and, like him, made strenuous efforts to detach Lorraine from his two allies. The gay Duke was then madly enamoured of the fair Beatrice de Cusance, Princess of Cantecroix. Mazarin laboured to gain over the lady, and he proposed to the ambitious and enterprising Charles IV. to break with Spain and march into Franche-Comté with the aid of France, promising to leave him in possession of all he might conquer. The Cardinal succeeded in winning over to his interest Duke Charles's own sister (the former mistress of Puylaurens), the Princess de Phalzbourg, then greatly fallen from her former "high estate," and who gave him secret and faithful account of all that passed in her brother's immediate circle. Mazarin required of her especially to keep him apprised of Madame de Chevreuse's slightest movement. He knew that she was in correspondence with the Duke de Bouillon, that she disposed of the Imperial general Piccolomini by means of her friend Madame

* See her letter to the Earl of Pembroke, dated Isle of Wight, 29th April, 1645, in "Archives des Affaires Étrangères, France," t. cvi. p. 162.

de' Strozzi, and even that she had preserved intact her sway over the Duke de Lorraine, in spite of the charms of the fair Beatrice. By the help of the Princess de Phalzbourg he watched every step, and disputed with her, foot to foot, possession of the fickle Charles IV., sometimes the victor, but very often the vanquished in this mysterious struggle.

The advantage remained with Madame de Chevreuse. Her ascendancy over Charles IV.—the offspring of love, surviving that passion, but more potent than all the later loves of that inconstant Prince—retained him in alliance with Spain, and frustrated Mazarin's projects. By degrees she became once more the soul of every intrigue planned against the French Government. She did not always attack it from without, but fostered internal difficulties, which, like the heads of the hydra, were unceasingly springing forth. Surrounded by a knot of ardent and obstinate emigrants, among others by the Count de Saint-Ybar, one of the most resolute men of the party, she kept up the spirits of the remnant of the *Importants* left in France, and everywhere added fuel to the fire of sedition. Actuated by strong passion, yet mistress of herself, she preserved a calm brow amidst the wrack of the tempest, at the same time that she displayed an indefatigable activity in surprising the enemy on his weak side. Making use alike of the Catholic and the Protestant party, at times she meditated a revolt in Languedoc, or a descent upon Brittany; at others, on the slightest symptom of discontent betrayed by some person of importance, she laboured to drive out Mazarin.

CHAPTER IV.

FATAL INFLUENCE OF MADAME DE LONGUEVILLE'S PASSION FOR LA ROCHEFOUCAULD.—THE FRONDE.

We do not propose to enter into the labyrinth of intrigues which preceded the outbreak of the Fronde, but confine ourselves to an endeavour to trace the motives which led Madame de Longueville to throw herself into the centre of the malcontents and to figure as the chief heroine in the varied scenes of that tragi-comedy of civil war.

The first Fronde was formed out of the *débris* of the *Importants*. It was composed of all the malcontents who made common cause with those members of the parliament who were irritated by the frequent bursal edicts, notably that which, in 1648, created twelve new appointments of *maîtres de requêtes*.

And now what gave birth to the Fronde, or what sustained it? What roused up the old party of the *Importants*, stifled for some years, it would seem, under the laurels of Rocroy? What separated the princes of the blood from the Crown? What turned against the throne that illustrious house of Condé, which, until then, had been its sword and shield? There were doubtless many general causes for all this; but it is impossible for us to conceal one—private, it is true, but which exercised a powerful and deplorable influence—the unexpected love of Madame de Longueville for one of the chiefs of the *Importants*, who had become one

of the chiefs of the Fronde. Yes—sad to say—it was Madame de Longueville, who, joining the party of the malcontents, attracted thereto, at first, a part of her family, then her entire family, and thus precipitated it from the pinnacle of honour and glory to which so many services had elevated it.

Scarcely had the treaty of Münster suspended the scourge of foreign war for France, than internal dissensions began to trouble the realm. The hatred which the Parliament bore to Mazarin, through his repression of its functions, primarily gave birth to civil war. The Duchess de Longueville became in the faction of the Fronde what the Duchess de Montpensier had been in that of the League. The former, however, did not at first attach so great an importance to the cause she espoused. Characteristically careless, she was by nature little inclined to agitation and intrigue. We have already shown that before her *liaison* with La Rochefoucauld, Madame de Longueville had been a stranger to politics. Occupied solely with innocent gallantry and the homage of the most refined society of the day, she allowed herself in all else to be led by her father and her elder brother. But no sooner was La Rochefoucauld master of her heart, than she gave herself wholly up to him, and became a mere instrument in his hands. Having been by him inspired with ambition, she made it a point of honour, and doubtless a secret happiness, to share his destiny.

It seems not improbable that the Duchess might have caught a liking for politics and negotiation during the conference of Munster. Certain it is that once plunged into the eddying tide of the Fronde, she loftily announced the project of remedying the general disorder of affairs. But she especially desired to employ therein the means which

confer celebrity, and it is difficult to deny that ambition, although without determinate aim, and the desire of establishing a high opinion of her intellect, may have had some share in the reasons which induced her to embrace the party opposed to Mazarin. With herself she drew her husband into it, as well as the Prince de Conti, her younger brother. As for the elder, the victorious Condé, he at first declared for the King and the Queen-Regent, which greatly incensed his sister against him, and caused her to enter into close compact, amongst others, with the Coadjutor, afterwards Cardinal de Retz—that mischievous man who figured so conspicuously as the evil genius of the Fronde.

The Gondis, who were the chief advisers of the St. Bartholomew, owed to that terrible exploit the result of being very nearly the hereditary possessors of the Archbishopric of Paris. But this last Gondi—John Francis Paul—owed something more: to be at the same time governor of Paris, and to unite both powers. With such purpose, he artfully worked upon the city through the curates who, distributing bread, soup, and every other kind of alms, carried along with them the famished masses. This young ecclesiastic of the de Retz family had risen into great favour with the serious and religious sections of the Parisian community. He was nephew of the Archbishop of Paris, and was himself Archbishop of Corinth; but as his flock in that metropolitan city were schismatic (except those who had turned Turks), he had leisure to assist his uncle in his high office, and was appointed his Coadjutor and successor. He preached at all the churches, held visitations at the convents, catechised the young, and consulted with the senior clergy on the management of the diocese. When he rode through the streets he was saluted with cheers and blessings,

and the orators of the Fronde held him up as the pattern of all the Christian virtues. At night he put off his episcopal robes, disguised himself as a trooper or tradesman, and attended the meetings of the discontented. In a short time he had distributed seven or eight thousand pounds in stirring up the passions of the people, and was daily in expectation of being summoned by his patroness the Queen to exert his influence in quelling them. The populace, with an Archbishop-governor of Paris at their head, imagined that they were going to rule there as in the time of the League. This made them both blind and deaf to the morals and manners of the little prelate. A braggart, a duellist, and more than a gallant—though having swarthy, ugly features, turned-up nose, and short, bandy legs—yet his expressive eyes carried off every fault, sparkling as they were with intelligence, audacity, and libertinage. Few withstood this subtle knave, for he was wont to waive all ceremonial and spare everybody prefatory speeches. The ladies of gallantry—especially those whose lover he was—were his most indefatigable political agents. The Queen, at length, suspecting that the worthy Archbishop was not quite the simple and self-denying individual he appeared, had him watched and followed. Whilst he flattered himself with the anticipation that his assistance would be solicited at the Palais Royal, the Queen was making a jest of him, aud Mazarin determined to strike the blow.

On the 27th of August, 1648, a vast assemblage crowded the spacious precincts of Notre Dame, to celebrate a *Te Deum* for the great victory of Lens, of which the youthful Condé had just sent home the news. When the multitude were dispersing, a dash was made upon two or three of the obnoxious councillors who had inflamed the discussions of

the Fronde—for that civil war was fairly on foot ere Anne of Austria and Mazarin knew of its existence. Two of the intended prisoners escaped, but a surly, burly demagogue, named Broussel, was tracked to his house in the mechanics' quarter of Paris, and arrested by an armed force. Thereupon the populace rose and armed against the Court. They made an extraordinary stand in the streets, having raised *twelve hundred* barricades in the course of twelve hours. They had no further need of De Retz. It was, however, one of his mistresses, the sister of a president and wife of a city captain, who having in her house the drum belonging to the citizen guard of that quarter, gave the first impulse by causing it to be beaten. The train was thus fired and the flame of civil war kindled. This was called the *Day of the Barricades.*

Thus, the royal power which, as wielded by Richelieu, had come to be considered as absolute, was attacked by three parties simultaneously—the great nobles, the parliamentarians, and the *bourgeoisie;* but, notwithstanding the dread of the common enemy, which united them, those parties were of different origin and conditions of existence, and consequently had different interests also. The great nobles wished to exercise power by placing themselves above the law; the parliament to increase its own through the law; the citizens to establish theirs at the expense of the law: for in their eyes the law was full of abuses and the royal power cruelly oppressive. All three parties, in order to arrive at their several ends, had, therefore, recourse to violence, or derived aid from it.

On the return of Madame de Longueville from Münster, there was already a ferment in the minds of the Parisians, of which the Regent took little heed. The Fronde cabal was

then brooding in the dark. When the rebellion, formed by Gondi, broke out at last under the circumstances just narrated, Madame de Longueville, alone of all the princesses of the blood, did not accompany Anne of Austria in her flight to Rueil. The Duchess strove her utmost to strengthen, by the concurrence of her entire family, the faction whose fortunes she had embraced through devotion to Marsillac. She did not, however, then succeed in detaching Condé from the Regent's party. The battle of the barricades followed close upon that of Lens, Condé's last victory. On his return, that victorious young soldier found royalty humiliated, the Parliament triumphing and dictating laws to the Crown; the Duke de Beaufort, with whom he once thought of measuring swords in defence of the honour of his sister, freed from his prison in Vincennes, and master of Paris by aid of the populace who idolized him; the vain and fickle Abbé de Retz transformed into a tribune of the people; the Prince de Conti into a generalissimo; M. de Longueville under the guidance of his wife and La Rochefoucauld; and the feeble Duke d'Orleans fancying himself almost a King, because he saw the Queen humiliated, and because the Frondeurs, cunningly flattering his self-love, were treating him like a sovereign. Condé, at a glance, saw the situation of affairs and his duty also; and without any hesitation he offered his sword to the Queen.

Brother and sister were, therefore, about to be arrayed against each other in the strife of civil war, and a stormy explanation took place between them. It is asserted that for some time back their reciprocal tenderness had suffered more than one interruption; that, in 1645, Madame de Longueville had crossed the loves of her brother and Mademoiselle du Vigean; that, in 1646, Condé, seeing her too

intimate with La Rochefoucauld, had caused her to be summoned to Münster by her husband. But for this we have only the authority of the Duchess de Nemours, her stepdaughter and unsparing censor, and nothing is less probable. The passion of Condé for Mademoiselle de Vigean extinguished itself, as all contemporaries affirm. The attentions of La Rochefoucauld to Madame de Longueville may have preceded the embassy of Münster, but they were not observed until 1647, and it is at the close of this year that Madame de Motteville places them, while attributing them especially to the desire of La Rochefoucauld to share the confidence of the sister with the brother. But it is very certain that as soon as the latter remarked this connection, he disapproved of it entirely; and not succeeding in his effort to rouse his sister from the intoxication of a first passion, he passed from the most ardent affection to a bitter discontent. In the autumn of 1648, on his return from Lens, this connection had acquired its greatest strength, and become almost notorious. Madame de Longueville, directed by La Rochefoucauld, did then everything possible to gain over her brother. She brought all her allurements to bear upon him, all her fondlings. She put into play everything which she thought might influence his fickle and passionate disposition—but failed. Neither did he succeed in gaining over her his accustomed ascendency. They quarrelled and separated openly. Madame de Longueville plunged more deeply into the Fronde, and Condé applied himself to giving the new *Importants* a harsh lesson.

The Queen had retired to Saint-Germain with the young King and all the government. Paris was under the absolute control of the Fronde. It stirred up the Parliament by the aid of a few ambitious councillors and by seditious and

mischievous inquests. It disposed of a great part of the Parisian clergy through the Coadjutor of the Archbishop, De Retz, who possessed and exercised all the authority of his uncle. It had continually at its head the two great houses of Vendôme and Lorraine, with two princes of the blood, the Prince de Conti and the Duke de Longueville, followed by a very great number of illustrious families, including the Dukes d'Elbeuf, de Bouillon, and de Beaufort, and other powerful nobles. It gave law in the *salons*, thanks to a brilliant bevy of pretty women, who drew after them the flower of the young nobility. In short, the army itself was divided. Turenne, with his troops, who were stationed near the Rhine until the perfect conclusion of the treaty of Westphalia, obedient to the suggestions of his elder brother, the Duke de Bouillon, who wished to recover his principality of Sedan, had just raised the standard of revolt, and was threatening to place the Court between his own army and that of Paris. The parliament of the capital had sent deputies to all the parliaments of the kingdom, and was thus forming a sort of formidable parliamentary league in the face of monarchy. Condé took command of all the troops that remained faithful, and everywhere opposed the insurrection. He wrote himself to the army of the Rhine, which well knew him, and which after the rout sustained by Turenne at Mariendal, had been led back by him to victory: these letters, supported by the proceedings of the government, succeeded in arresting the revolt; and Turenne, abandoned by his own soldiers, was obliged to fly to Holland.* At easé on this head, Condé marched upon Paris, and placed it under siege. Instead of disputing the

* "History of Turenne," by Ramsay, vol. ii.

ground, as he might have done, foot by foot, with the sedition, he allowed it the freest course, in the certainty that the spectacle of licentiousness which could not fail to appear would, little by little, restore to royalty those who had for a moment gone astray. He began by summoning, in the Queen's name and through his mother, all his family to Saint-Germain. The Prince de Conti and M. de Longueville did not dare disobey; but La Rochefoucauld, seeing that the Fronde was in the greatest peril, hastened after these two princes. Having brought them back to Paris, he made the Prince de Conti generalissimo—placing under him the Dukes d'Elbeuf and de Bouillon—and who shared authority with the Marshal de la Mothe Houdancourt, governor of Paris. Madame de Longueville excused herself to the Queen and to her mother on the grounds of her delicate condition, which would not permit her to undertake the least fatigue. In fact, Madame de Longueville, it may be noted, was *enceinte* for the last time in 1648, when, it must be confessed, her connection with La Rochefoucauld was well known. It was in this condition that, willing to share the perils of her friends, proud also of playing a part and of filling all the trumpets of fame, she enacted Pallas as well as she was able. It is at least certain that she shared all the fatigues of the siege, that she was present at the reviews of the troops, at the parades of the citizen soldiery, and that all the civil and military plans were discussed before her. In this disorder and confusion, amidst the tumult of arms and vociferations of the insurrection, she appeared as if in her natural element. She encouraged, counselled, acted, and the most energetic resolutions emanated from her. The memoirs of the times are full, in regard to this, of the most curious details. The Hôtel de

Longueville was continually filled with officers and generals; nothing was seen there but plumes, helmets, and swords.

Notwithstanding all this, the democratic spirit which had originated the Fronde was not satisfied. It beheld with displeasure all the forces of Paris in the hands of the brother, of the brother-in-law, and of the sister of him who commanded the siege. Believing very little, and with reason, in the patriotism of the princes, the citizens demanded some sureties from the chiefs who might at any time betray them, and make peace, at their expense, with Saint-Germain. No one seemed to know how to appease this clamorous multitude, without which nothing further could be done. It was then that Madame de Longueville showed that, if she had forgotten her true duties, she had retained the energy of her race and the intrepidity of the Condés. Under the advice of De Retz, she induced her husband to present himself to the Parliament and inform them that he had come to offer his services, as well as the towns of Rouen, Caen, Dieppe, and the whole of Normandy, of which he was governor; and he begged the Parliament to consent that his wife and two children should be lodged at the Hôtel de Ville as a guarantee for the execution of his word. His speech was received with acclamations; and while the deliberations were still going on, De Retz proceeded to seek the Duchess de Longueville and the Duchess de Bouillon, both prepared to act a part in the scene he proposed to display. He had already caused the proposal of the Duke de Longueville to be spread amongst the populace; and hurrying the two princesses into a carriage, dressed with studied and artful negligence, but surrounded by a splendid suite, and followed by an immense crowd to the principal quarter of the insurrection—the Hôtel de Ville—those lovely and

interesting women were placed in the hands of the people as hostages with all that was most dear to them. "Imagine," says De Retz, "these two beautiful persons upon the balcony of the Hôtel de Ville; more beautiful because they appeared neglected, although they were not. Each held in her arms one of her children, who were as beautiful as their mothers." La Grève was full of people, even to the house tops; the men all raised cries of joy, and the women wept with emotion. De Retz, meanwhile, threw handfuls of money from the windows of the Hôtel de Ville amongst the populace, and then, leaving the princesses under the protection of the city, he returned to the Palais de Justice, followed by an immense multitude, whose acclamations rent the skies.

On the night of the 28th of January, 1649, Madame de Longueville gave birth to her last child, a son, who was baptized by De Retz, having for its godfather the Provost, for its godmother the Duchess de Bouillon, and who received the name of Charles de Paris; the child of the Fronde, handsome, talented, and brave; who during his life was the troublesome hope, the melancholy joy of his mother, and the cause of her greatest grief in 1672, when he perished, at the passage of the Rhine, by the side of his uncle, Condé.

The Prince de Conti being declared *generalissimo of the army of the King, under the parliament*, and the Dukes de Bouillon and Elbeuf, with the Marshal de la Mothe, generals under him, De Retz saw the full fruition of his intrigues. A civil war was now inevitable. The great and the little, the wise and the foolish, the rash and the prudent, the cowardly and the brave, were all engaged and jumbled up pell-mell on both sides; and the mixture was so strange, so heterogeneous, and so incomprehensible, that a sentiment of the ridiculous

was irresistibly paramount, and the war began amongst fits of laughter on all sides. That same day Condé's cavaliers came galloping into the faubourgs to fire their pistols at the Parisians, whilst the Marquis de Noirmoutier went forth with the cavalry of the Fronde to skirmish with them, and returning to the Hôtel de Ville, entered the circle of the Duchess de Longueville, followed by his officers, each wearing his cuirass, as he came from the field. The hall was filled with ladies preparing to dance, the troops were drawn up in the square, and this mixture of blue scarves and ladies, cuirasses and violins and trumpets, formed, says De Retz, a spectacle much more common in romances than anywhere else.

The serio-grotesque drama of the Fronde was thus initiated.

CHAPTER V.

MADAME DE LONGUEVILLE WINS HER BROTHER CONDÉ OVER TO THE FRONDE.

THIS first raising of bucklers by the Frondeurs was not of long duration. At the conclusion of a peace between Mazarin and the Parliament, a perfect understanding prevailed amongst all the members of the Condé family. The civil dissensions, however, were sufficiently prolonged to exhibit the errors of all parties—even those who had entered therein with virtuous inclinations and intentions, ashamed of the stains which had tarnished them in the struggle, almost invariably ended by confining themselves to the narrow circle of individual interests, and completed their degradation by no longer recognizing any other motive for their conduct than that of sordid selfishness. All care for the public weal became extinct; men's hearts were insensible to all generous sympathy; their minds dead to every elevating impulse—like to those aromatics which, after diffusing both glow and perfume from their ardent brazier, lose by combustion all power of further rekindling, and present nothing else than vile ashes, without heat, light, or odour.

The peace concluded between the Minister and the Fronde was destined to be of short duration. It was, properly speaking, nothing but a suspension of arms, and in no degree a suspension of intrigues and cabals. That suspen-

sion of arms, however, had been accompanied by an amnesty, including all persons except the Coadjutor. The other chief personages who had played a part in the insurrection of Paris, and who now proceeded to visit the Court, were by no means warmly received by the Queen, though Mazarin himself displayed nothing but mildness and humility. The Duke d'Orleans and the Prince de Condé visited the city; and the first was received with much enthusiasm by the populace, who attributed to his counsels the truce of which all parties had stood so much in need. The Prince de Condé, whose warlike spirit had not only aided in stirring up the strife at first, but would have protracted it still further had his advice been listened to, was not looked upon with the same favour by the Parisians; but the Parliament sent deputations to them both on their arrival in the city, to compliment them on their efforts for the restoration of peace.

During Condé's visit to Paris, a reconciliation took place between him and his fair sister, the Duchess de Longueville. The violent language he had used to her on various occasions, the imputations he had cast upon her character, and the harsh nature of the advice which he had given to her husband concerning her, were all forgotten, and she resumed her ascendancy over his mind so completely as in a very short time to detach him entirely from the side of Mazarin, and to lead him, before he quitted Paris, to speak publicly of the Minister in the scornful and contemptuous manner in which he was usually treated by the leaders of the Fronde.

The Duchess de Longueville herself remained as strongly opposed to the Cardinal as ever. But though she still retained towards Anne of Austria that dislike which she had always felt, and which the sense of an inferiority of station

greatly augmented in a woman of a haughty and ambitious character, she found herself obliged, in common propriety, to appear at Court on the conclusion of the Siege of Paris. The first visits of her husband and herself, after the insurrection, were rendered remarkable by the extraordinary degree of embarrassment and timidity shown by two such bold and fearless persons. The Duke de Longueville arrived first, coming from Normandy; and was followed by a very numerous and splendid train, as though he rested for mental support upon the number of his retainers. The Queen received him in the midst of her Court, with Mazarin standing beside her; and every one crowded round to hear what excuses the Duke would offer for abandoning the royal family at the moment of their greatest need. Longueville, however, approached the Regent with a troubled and embarrassed air, attempted to speak, became first deadly pale, and then as red as fire, but could not utter a word. He then turned and bowed to Mazarin, who came forward, spoke to him, and led him to a window, where they conversed for some time together in private; after which they visited each other frequently, and became apparent friends.

The reception of the proud and beautiful Duchess at St. Germain, though not so public, was not less embarrassing. The Queen had lain down on her bed when the Duchess was announced, and, as was customary in those days, received her in that situation. Madame de Longueville was naturally very apt to blush, and the frequent variation of her complexion added greatly, we are told, to the dazzling character of her beauty. Her blushes, however, on approaching the Queen, became painful; all that she could utter was a few confused sentences, of which the Queen could not understand a word, and those were pronounced in so low a tone that Madame de

Motteville, who listened attentively, could distinguish nothing but the word *Madame.*

As there was no sincerity in these reconciliations, it is not surprising to find that ere long the conduct of the Prince de Condé gave no slight uneasiness to Mazarin. The Prince had, however, brought back the Court to Paris; but from that very day he had shown a great change in his attitude, and it is to the influence of La Rochefoucauld that such change must be attributed. At that moment, in fact, the Sieur Condé had become reconciled with every member of his family, and even with his sister's lover. He drew closer also the links between himself and the Duke d'Orleans, for whom he shewed great deference, say his contemporaries, and he began to treat Mazarin with much indifference, rallying him publicly, and declaring aloud that he regretted to have maintained him in a post of which he was so little worthy. Enjoying a great military reputation, feared and esteemed by the bulk of his countrymen, he chafed at seeing himself compromised by the unpopularity of the Cardinal. He thought that by drawing closer to the *Frondeurs,* he should rid himself of the feeling that oppressed him. In the outset, he had no idea of actively joining that faction, but his sister did the rest, and hurried him on to become the enemy of that party of which he had just been the saviour.

It is true that, for the memorable service which he had recently rendered, Condé reaped scarcely any benefit; but his noble conduct increased the splendour of his last campaign of 1648. It added to his military titles those of defender and saviour of the throne, of pacificator of the realm, of arbiter and enlightened conciliator of parties. It gave the climax to his credit and to his glory. Nevertheless,

he did not lose sight of the jealous feeling to which such claims gave birth, whether on the part of the Duke d'Orleans or the Prime Minister; and he well knew that he was exposed to one of those *coups d'état*, the necessity of which the Chancellor as well as himself had urged at Rueil. He considered himself as the head of the nobility, and that important body seemed to constitute all the military power of the State. But the French nobility was just beginning to lose its former independence of character in becoming more courtierlike. Instead of deriving from its strongholds and vassals the feeling of its strength and equality, it showed itself ambitious of such distinctions as the monarch could confer. In the indulgence of its vanity it lost sight of its proper pride; and if that new emulation which the Bourbons had excited was more easy for the sovereign to satisfy, it was more difficult for the chief of a party to direct. Moreoyer, Condé, as the Duchess de Nemours remarks, knew better how to win battles than hearts.* He found a dangerous pleasure, as did his sister the Duchess de Longueville, in braving malevolence. "In matters of consequence, they delighted to thwart people, and in ordinary life they were so impracticable that there was no getting on with them. They had such a habit of ridiculing one, and of saying offensive things, that nobody could put up with them. When visits were paid to them, they allowed such a scornful *ennui* to be visible, and showed so openly that their visitors bored them, that it was not difficult to understand that they did everything in their power to get rid of their company. Whatsoever might be the rank or quality of the visitors, people were made to wait any length of time in the Prince's antechamber; and very often, after having long waited,

* Duchesse de Nemours, tom. xxxiv. p. 437.

everybody was sent away without getting an interview, however short. When they were displeased they pushed people to the utmost extremity, and they were incapable of showing any gratitude for services done them. Thus they were alike hated by the Court, by the Fronde, and by the populace, and nobody could live with them long. All France impatiently suffered their irritating conduct, and especially their pride, which was excessive." *

In looking at the faulty side of Condé's character, we must not forget to observe the disinterested firmness with which, without considering either his family or his friends, he had hitherto acted in the interests of the King. Happy would it have been, if, after having thus terminated this sad civil war, he had quitted the Court and its intrigues to seek other battlefields, and to finish another war somewhat more useful and glorious to France—that which still remained with Spain! Happy, also for Madame de Longueville, if, taught by her own conscience, in her last interview with the Queen, and by the shameful *dénouement* of the miserable intrigues of which she had the secret, instead of still serving as their instrument, she had shown her courage in resisting them. Happy too, if, after all the proofs of devotion which she had just given to La Rochefoucauld, she had firmly represented to him that, even for his own interest, a different course was necessary; that it would be better to look for fortune and honours by rendering himself esteemed than by trying to make himself feared; that ambition as well as duty showed his place to be by the side of Condé, in the service of the

* The Duchess de Nemours was a daughter of the Duke de Longueville, by his first wife, and as she lived with her step-mother, the Duchess de Longueville, on very indifferent terms, her unsparing censure must by no means be implicitly received.

State and of the King; that it was easy for him to obtain in the army some post where he would simply have to march forward and do his duty, trusting to his courage and his other merits!

But even if Anne de Bourbon had been wise enough to speak thus to La Rochefoucauld, she would not have succeeded in gaining his ear. His restless spirit, his ever-discontented vanity, pursuing by turns the most dissimilar objects, because it selected none within its reach—that *undefinable something* which, as De Retz says, was in La Rochefoucauld, made him abandon the high and direct roads, and led him into by-paths full of pitfalls and precipices. Through such perilous ways we shall see the infatuated woman following and aiding him in his extravagant and guilty designs. Receiving the law instead of giving it, she strives to promote the passion of another by devoting to his service all her coquetry as well as greatness of soul, her penetration and intrepidity, her attractive sweetness and indomitable energy. She undertakes to mislead Condé, to rob France of the conqueror of Rocroy and of Lens, and to give him to Spain.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CAUSES WHICH LED TO THE *COUP D'ÉTAT*—THE ARREST OF THE PRINCES.

In the first scenes of the shifting drama, the Court had supported Condé in compassing the destruction of the Frondeurs; and Mazarin, with keen policy, instigated the Prince to every act that could widen the breach between him and the faction. Whichever succeeded, the party that succumbed would be inimical to the Minister; and in their divisions was his strength. But the pride and impetuosity of Condé were about this time excited to such a degree by opposition and irritation, that it approached to frenzy, and, unable to overpower at once the leaders of the Fronde, the vehemence of his nature spent itself upon those who were in reality supporting him. He still scoffed at, and openly insulted, Mazarin; he accused the Government of not giving him sincere assistance against the Fronde. He every day made enemies amongst the nobility by his overbearing conduct and his rash, and often illegal, acts; and at length the disgust and indignation of the whole Court was roused to put a stop to a tyranny which could no longer be borne.

Anne of Austria long hesitated as to what she should do to deliver herself from the domination of a man whom she feared without loving: but at length an aggravated insult to herself, and the counsels of a woman of a bold and daring character, removed her irresolution. The Duchess de

Chevreuse had been exiled from France, as we have seen, during the greater part of that period in which Condé had principally distinguished himself, and she did not share in the awe in which the Parisians held him. She still kept up what De Retz calls an incomprehensible union with the Queen, notwithstanding all her intrigues; nor did she scruple to hold out to Anne of Austria a direct prospect of gaining the support of the Fronde itself in favour of her Government, if that Government would aid in avenging the Fronde upon the Prince de Condé.

Anne of Austria was unwilling to take a step which appeared to border upon ingratitude, although the late conduct of the Prince might well be supposed to cancel the obligation of his former services. It seems here necessary to say a few words upon the connection of a series of sudden political changes, in order that the reader may understand how such startling results as those we are about to narrate were brought about.

The hollow treaty of peace of the 11th March, 1649, had scarcely been signed ere the Prince de Condé showed himself day by day more strongly attached to the faction which opposed the Court. Feeling his own importance, determined to rule; quick, harsh, and impetuous in his manners, he took a pleasure in insulting the Minister and embarrassing the Queen. There were some personal grounds for this in the strong dislike manifested towards his sister by Anne of Austria. That feeling was signally shown on the occasion of Louis XIV. completing his eleventh year; when a grand ball was given at the Hôtel de Ville, at which the young King, with all the principal members of the royal family and the Court, were present. The Queen's orders were received with regard to all the arrangements, every

person of distinction being invited by her command, except the Duchess de Longueville. That princess, influenced by discontent, it is supposed, at the reception of the royal family in Paris, had remained at Chantilly, on the pretence of drinking some mineral waters in the neighbourhood. The Queen seized the same pretext not to invite her, replying to those who pressed her to do so, that she would not withdraw her from the pursuit of health; but at length the Prince de Condé himself demanded that she should receive a summons; and his support was of too much consequence, and the bonds which attached him to the Court too slight, for the Queen to trifle with his request.

To the surprise and dissatisfaction of most persons, however, Anne of Austria commanded that the ball should take place in daylight; acknowledging, in her own immediate circle, that it was in order to mortify the ladies attached to the Fronde, the principal part of whom employed methods of enhancing their beauty and heightening their complexion to which the searching eye of day was very inimical. Human malice, of course, took care that the Queen's motive should be communicated to all the higher circles of Paris; and as vanity is not only a more pugnacious passion, but a much more pertinacious adversary than any other, the words of Anne of Austria rendered many opponents irreconcilable, who might otherwise have been gained to her cause: the family of the Prince de Condé naturally being among the number.

France was then able to count the cost of having created a hero—*expendere Hannibalem*—a prince *à la Corneille*, who carried his gaze to the stars, and only spoke to mortals from the summit of his trophies. His sister, Madame de Longueville, had also in the same fashion soared into the

sphere of a goddess. The one and the other, in the empyrean, no longer distinguished their fellow mortals from such a height save with a smile of disdain. Great folks, as a contemporary tells us, kicked their heels in their antechambers for hours, and, when granted an audience, were received with yawning and gaping.

The reconciliation effected during the preceding year was rather, as has been said, a truce between the parties than a solid peace. The Parliament had retained the right of assembling and deliberating upon affairs of state, which the Court had sought to prevent: and Mazarin remained Minister, although the Parliament, the people, and even the princes, had desired that he should cease to hold that office. It rarely happens to states in like unfortunate emergencies that among the men who show themselves most active and skilful in overthrowing a government there are found those capable of conducting one; and when such do appear, the chances almost always are that circumstances hinder them from placing themselves in the front rank. It was to Gaston, the King's uncle, Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, that belonged, in concert with the Regent, the chief direction of affairs; but Gaston felt himself too weak and too incapable to pretend to charge himself with such a burden. He could never arrive at any decision, and took offence when any matter was decided without him. Jealous of Mazarin's influence, more jealous still of that of Condé, neither of the two could attempt to govern along with him; and nevertheless Gaston was powerful enough to command a party, and to hinder any one from governing without him: ready to offer opposition to everything, but impotent to carry anything into execution. If Anne of Austria had even consented to dismiss her favourite

Minister, and overcome her repugnance to the Fronde and the Frondeurs, she could not have formed a government with the chiefs of that party. The Duke de Beaufort, its nominal head, lacked both instruction and intelligence. De Retz, its veritable chief—an eloquent, witty, and bold man, skilful in the conduct of business, in the art of making partisans; brave, generous, even loyal when he followed the impulses of his own mind and natural inclination—was without faith, scruple, reticence, or foresight when he abandoned himself to his passions, which urged him unceasingly to the indulgence of an excessive and irrational libertinage. Such a man could not have replaced him who for so long a period had informed himself of the affairs of France under a master such as Richelieu; who, deeply versed in dissimulation, was inaccessible to any sentiment that might possibly derange the calculations of his ambition. Besides, he, as well as Mazarin, would have had the Princes against him, and could not have resisted successfully their numerous partisans. De Retz had, through the ascendancy of his talents, great influence with the Parisian Parliament, but it mistrusted him; and that body, in its heterogeneous composition, offered rather the means for an opposition than strength to the Government. Condé, to whom the state owed its glory, and the Sovereign his safety, was therefore the sole prop upon which Anne of Austria might have rested; but that young hero had no capacity for business. He could not then have filled up the void which Mazarin's retirement would have created. Condé, whose natural pride was still further exalted by the flattery of the young nobles who formed his train, and who obtained the nickname of *petits maîtres*, only used the influence which his position gave him to wring from Mazarin the places and good things at his disposal, and of

these he and his adherents showed themselves insatiable. Thus, Condé rendered himself formidable and odious to Mazarin, and made himself detested by the people as Mazarin's supporter, at the same time that by his arrogance he shocked the Parliament, already unfavourably disposed towards him on account of his rapacity and his ambition.*

Such was the state of things, when the singular circumstances which attended the murder of one of Condé's domestics made that prince believe that the chiefs of the Fronde had conspired to assassinate him. He thought, by such a crime, to have found an opportunity for crushing that faction in the persons of its chiefs, and he instituted a process in parliament against the contrivers of that murder. Public report particularly pointed to two persons, De Retz and Beaufort; and Condé, by his accusation, hoped to force them to quit Paris, where they found their principal means of influence in the populace. But in attacking thus, as it were, face to face, the two most popular men of the moment, Condé showed no better tact than in dealing with the Prime Minister. He conducted himself with so much haughtiness and arrogance, that the young nobles who surrounded the soldier prince, when they wished to flatter him, spoke of Mazarin as his slave.†

The process went on nevertheless. Almost all the judges were convinced of the innocence of the accused, but Condé pretended that they could not be absolved without giving a deadly affront to himself. He demanded that at the very least the Coadjutor and Beaufort should be made to quit Paris under some honourable pretext, and the Princess-Dowager de Condé declared that it was the height of inso-

* Talon, mém. t. lxii. pp. 65—105.—Montpensier.

† Motteville, mém. t. xxxix. p. 4.—Guy-Joly.

lence in them to remain in the capital when it was her son's wish that they should leave it. The Queen, who equally detested the Prince de Condé and the Frondeurs, could scarcely conceal her joy at seeing them at daggers drawn with each other; feeling certain that the moment was at hand when their dissensions would restore her supremacy.

Under such circumstances Condé had need of all his friends, but he considered that he was set at defiance, and he gave way all the more to his wonted pride and overbearing obstinacy. He seemed to take pleasure in offending Anne of Austria and Mazarin. The young Duke de Richelieu had been declared heir to an immense fortune, of which his aunt and guardian, the Duchess d'Aiguillon, was the depositary. The stronghold of Havre de Grâce, which the Cardinal de Richelieu had formerly held as a place of retreat, was by such title in the possession of the Duchess d'Aiguillon. Condé desired to be master of it, either for himself or for his brother-in-law, the Duke de Longueville. The young Duke de Richelieu was engaged to be married to Mademoiselle de Chevreuse, but the Prince having remarked that he had some liking for Madame de Pons, a sister of his own first love, managed to marry him clandestinely to her in the Château de Trye, lent him two thousand pistoles until he should be of age to enter upon possession of his property, and made him take possession of Havre de Grâce. The Queen was mortally offended at such a proceeding on the part of Condé, who had moreover threatened to throw into the sea those she might send to Havre to seize the fortress; but the Duchess d'Aiguillon's resentment was still deeper and more active. She was the first to tell Anne of Austria, that she would never be queen again until she had had the Prince de Condé arrested,

assuring her that all the Frondeurs would lend their hands to aid her in carrying out such a resolution.

Almost at this moment, a gentleman named Jarzé, attached to Condé, foolishly took it into his head that the Queen entertained a liking for him, and it reached her ears that Condé and his friends had amused themselves whilst at table over their wine with Jarzé's revelations of his amour with her, and that he had begun to feel certain of getting rid of Mazarin by that means. Mazarin himself probably became somewhat alarmed, as he spoke pointedly to the Queen on the subject, who pretended only to have contemplated the ridiculous side of her new adorer's gallantries. But when Jarzé next made his appearance in her cabinet, she rated him roundly before the whole Court upon his absurd fatuity, and forbade him ever to enter her presence again. The Prince de Condé, pretending to feel hurt at the affront put upon Jarzé, early next morning paid the Prime Minister a visit, and insolently demanded that Jarzé should be received that very evening by the Queen. Anne of Austria submitted to his dictation, but could not endure such humiliation without seeking to avenge herself. In a woman's heart every other species of resentment yields to that of wounded pride. A few lines addressed to the Coadjutor in the Queen's own handwriting, and carried by Madame de Chevreuse, brought to her side that wily priest and formidable tribune, disguised *en cavalier*. Certain negotiations, however, which had preceded this interview, had reached the ears of Condé, who went to Mazarin to denounce the treachery. The Cardinal, glowing with a hatred which would have stopped at nothing for its gratification, laughed and jested, or flattered and soothed the object of his concealed wrath. He turned the Archbishop

of Corinth into ridicule when Condé blamed him for his duplicity. "If I catch him," said the Cardinal, "in the disguise you speak of—in his feathered hat, and cloak, and military boots—I will get a sight of him for your Highness;" and they roared at the idea of discovering the intriguer in so unfitting an apparel. But shortly afterwards in the wintry gloom of a January midnight (1650), disguised beyond the reach of detection, and guarded by a passport from the Cardinal himself, De Retz was admitted at midnight by a secret door into the Regent's room at the Palais Royal, and deep conference was held between the two. The conditions of agreement were readily stipulated. The Coadjutor with an inconceivable address and most extraordinary success handled the threads of the intrigues consequent upon such agreement. He succeeded in making himself the confidant of Gaston; he made him renounce his favourite, the Abbé de la Rivière; he engaged him in the coalition which had been just set on foot between the Court and the Fronde, and he obtained his assent to the arrest of the Princes. Everything succeeded that was agreed upon. The Queen-Regent, at the moment of a council being held at the Palais-Royal, gave the fatal order, and then withdrew into her oratory. There she made the young King kneel down beside her in order to invoke Heaven in concert with herself to obtain the happy achievement of an act of tyranny which was destined to produce fresh woes to the realm, and to rekindle in it the flames of civil war.

On the morrow of the 18th of January, 1650, all Paris was electrified at the news of the arrest of the three Princes —Condé, Conti, and Longueville. That bold *coup d'état* was effected very easily and unceremoniously. The Princes went voluntarily, as it were, into the mouse-trap, by attend-

ing a great council at the Palais Royal. Anne had obtained from Condé an order for the seizure and detention of three or four persons whose names were left in blank; and on the authority of his own signature, the hero of Rocroy and the other two princes, were led quietly down a back stair, given over to the custody of a small escort of twenty men under the command of Guitaut and Comminges, and by them conducted during the night to Vincennes.

CHAPTER VII.

MADAME DE LONGUEVILLE'S ADVENTURES IN NORMANDY. THE WOMEN'S WAR.

THE heroes having thus suddenly disappeared from the scene, the political stage was left clear for the performance of the heroines. We are now about to see the women, almost by themselves, carry on the civil war, govern, intrigue, fight. A great experience for human nature, a fine historical opportunity for observing that gallant transfer of all power from the one sex to the other—the men lagging behind, led, directed, in the second or third ranks. But those women of rank, young, beautiful, brilliant, and for the most part gallant, were doubtless more formidable to the minister at this juncture than the men. The two lovely duchesses, De Longueville and De Bouillon, having shown during the preceding year of what they were capable; the Queen therefore gave orders for their arrest. The wary lover of the fascinating politician who had lately begun to scatter her blandishments equally upon all—La Rochefoucauld—having been apprised by the captain of his quarter that some blow was meditated by Mazarin, had sent twice to warn the Princes through the Marquis de la Moussaye, but who, as it appears, failed to acquit himself of that important mission. But if La Rochefoucauld's warning failed to reach the ears of the Princes, he was more fortunate in effecting the escape of Madame de Longueville.

Whilst they were seeking to arrest him as well as La Moussaye, the Queen despatched a note to the Duchess by the Secretary of State, La Veillière, begging her to come to the Palais Royal. Instead of going thither she went direct to the Hôtel of the Princess Palatine—like herself beautiful, gallant, and intriguing, but endowed with a superior intellect. This lady speedily became the head and mainspring of the princes' party—or of the *second* Fronde, and the Coadjutor, who directed the Old Fronde, was fain to recognise in her a worthy rival, and his equal in political sagacity. Fearing to be discovered if she remained under the roof of the princess, a carriage was procured, and the duchess driven in it by La Rochefoucauld himself to an obscure house in the Faubourg St. Germain, where they remained until nightfall in a cellar. Thence the Duchess and her lover set out for Normandy on horseback under the escort of forty determined men provided by the Princess Palatine. Brave and resolute as her brother, the sister of Condé rode northwards through that entire winter's night and the following day, and sought no shelter until worn out with excessive fatigue she reached Rouen. But the commandant, the Marquis de Beuvron, although an old friend of the duke, declared he could not serve her, and refused to raise the banner of revolt in that stronghold of her husband's government. Her attempt at Rouen thus receiving a complete check, she had some hope of being received into the citadel of Havre, but the Duchess de Richelieu, though her friend, was not so much mistress there as the Duchess d'Aiguillon, who, on the contrary, was full of resentment against her. Discouraged and repulsed on all hands, the fugitive Duchess next made her way to Dieppe, where she thought herself in sufficient safety to part with

La Rochefoucauld, who left her to assist the Duke de Bouillon to raise troops in Angoumois. In the fortress of Dieppe, commanded by a faithful officer of her husband, Madame de Longueville found the rest she so much needed. In a brief space, with spirits recruited, she resolved to make a stand to the uttermost against the Queen and Mazarin, and having replaced the royal standard by that of Condé set about putting the citadel in a state of defence to resist a siege. The Queen, however, having resolved not to give the Duchess time to raise her husband's government of Normandy into revolt, on the 1st of February quitted Paris for Rouen. The band of gentlemen who had gathered round the beautiful Frondeuse thereupon melted away, and Mademoiselle de Longueville, her step-daughter, afterwards Duchess de Nemours, quitted her to take refuge in a convent. As Montigny, the commandant at Dieppe, declared that it was impossible to hold the fortress, the Duchess left the place by a secret portal, followed by her women and some few gentlemen. She held her way for two leagues on foot along the coast to the little port of Tourville, in order to reach a small vessel which she had prudently hired in case of need. On reaching the point of embarkation the sea was breaking so furiously in surf on shore, the tide being so strong and the wind so high, that Madame de Longueville's followers entreated her not to attempt to reach the vessel. But the Duchess, dreading less the angry waves than the chance of falling into the Regent's power, persisted in going to sea. As the state of the tide and weather rendered it impossible for a boat to get near the shore, a sailor took her in his arms to carry her on board, but had not waded above twenty paces when a huge roller carried him off his feet, and he fell with his fair burden.

For an instant the poor lady believed that she was lost, as in falling the sailor lost his hold of her and she sank into deep water. On being rescued, however, she expressed her resolve to reach the vessel, but the sailors refusing to make another attempt, she found herself compelled to resort to some other means of escape. Horses being luckily procured, the Duchess mounted *en croupe* behind one of the gentlemen of her suite, and riding all night and part of the following day, the fugitives met with a hospitable reception from a nobleman of Caux, in whose little manor-house they found rest, refection, and concealment for the space of a week.

The Duchess's tumble into the sea, though a disagreeable, turned out to have been a lucky accident, for she now learnt that the master of the vessel she had been so anxious to reach was in the interest of Mazarin, and had she gone on board she would have been arrested. At length Madame de Longueville found herself once more in Havre, and having won over the captain of an English ship to whom she introduced herself—like Madame de Chevreuse—in male attire, as a nobleman who had just been engaged in a duel, and was obliged to leave France, she succeeded in obtaining a passage to Rotterdam. Thence, passing through Flanders, she reached the stronghold of Stenay,* where the Viscomte de Turenne, already compromised with the Court for having openly espoused the Condé party, had shortly before the Duchess's arrival also taken refuge.

It was then that the Duchess, who, under the sway of La Rochefoucauld, had been one of the instruments of the first Fronde war, became the motive power of the second

* Stenay, taken from the Spaniards in 1641, had been given to the Prince de Condé in 1646.

and far more serious one—well named by the witty Parisians "the women's war." From the citadel of Stenay, of which she took the command, she directed the wills and actions of the men of her party, into which she thoroughly won over Turenne. Her importunities, aided by her charms, prevailed so powerfully over his valiant though fallible heart, that the illustrious captain, after having struggled painfully for some time with his conscience, allied himself with the Spaniards by a treaty which placed him, as well as the sister of the great Condé, in the pay of the enemies of his king and country. The treaty effectively stipulated "that there should be a junction of the two armies, and that the war should be carried on by the assistance of the King of Spain until a peace should be concluded between the two kings and the princes liberated. That the King of Spain should engage to pay over to Madame de Longueville and to Monsieur de Turenne two hundred thousand crowns wherewith to raise and equip troops; that he should furnish them with forty thousand crowns per month for the payment of such troops, and sixty thousand crowns per annum in three payments for *the table and equipages* of Madame de Longueville and Monsieur de Turenne." This treaty duly signed, Madame de Longueville issued, in the form of a letter to his Majesty the King of France, a manifesto very skilfully drawn up and filled with artful complaints and accusations against Mazarin, with the design of soliciting through the one and the other an apology for her own conduct, as though it were possible to justify herself for having entered into a compact with the enemies of her country.

It was during her sojourn at Stenay that she lost her mother (2nd December, 1650). "My dear friend," said the

Princess de Condé to Madame de Brienne, who was with her during her last moments, "tell that 'pauvre miserable' who is now at Stenay the condition in which you have seen me, that she may learn how to die."

During the whole of this period, the Duke de la Rochefoucauld gave constant proof of a rare fidelity. M. Cousin speaks very precisely on this head. "Whilst Madame de Longueville was pledging her diamonds in Holland for the defence of Stenay, La Rochefoucauld expended his fortune in Guienne. It was the most grievous and, at the same time, the most touching moment of their lives and their adventures. They were far away from each other, but they still fondly loved; they served with equal ardour the same cause, they fought and suffered equally and at the same time." Abundant proofs might be instanced of this love and devotion on their part. La Rochefoucauld wrote unceasingly to Stenay, and gave an account of everything he did. "The sole aim, then, of all the Duke's exertions," says Lenet, "was to please that beautiful princess, and he took endless care and pleasure to acquaint her with all he did for her, and to deliver the princess her sister-in-law (Condé's wife), by despatching couriers to her on the subject." He informs us moreover that, "in every juncture, he forwarded expresses to render account to the Duchess of all that respect for her made him undertake. At this moment, in fact, having just succeeded to his patrimonial estates through the death of his father, La Rochefoucauld recognised no obstacle in his path, but bravely went forward in the cause he had espoused and generously sacrificed his property in Angoumois and Saintonge. His ancestral château of Verteuil was even razed to the ground by Mazarin's orders, and when the tidings of it reached him, he received them with such great

firmness, says Lenet, "that he seemed as though he were delighted, through a feeling that it would inspire confidence in the minds of the Bordelais. It was further said that what gave him the liveliest pleasure was to let the Duchess de Longueville see that he hazarded everything in her service." It cannot be denied, in fine, that the Duke at that time yielded himself up to a sentiment as deep as it was sincere, and which contradicts very happily and without any possible doubt the assertion so often hazarded that he had never loved the woman whom he had seduced and dragged into the vortex of politics. Madame de Longueville and he adored each other at this period, says M. Cousin, and it is pleasant to be able to cite the opinion of that eminent historian upon such fact; although separated by the entire length of France, they suffered and struggled each for the other: they had the same aim, the same faith, the same hope. They wrote incessantly to communicate their thoughts and projects, and thus sought to diminish in imagination the enormous distance which is between Stenay and Bordeaux.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRINCESS PALATINE.

The arrest of the Princes had singularly complicated events on the political stage. It had displaced all interests, and, instead of re-uniting parties and consolidating them, it had the effect of increasing their number. No fewer than five might be counted, represented by as many principal leaders, around which were grouped every species of interest and every shade of ambition.

In the first place there was the party of Mazarin, alone against all the rest. This party had for support the ability of its chief, the invincible predilection, the unshakeable firmness of Anne of Austria, and the name of the King. Herein lay its whole strength, but that strength was immense. It was that which ensured the obedience of the enlightened and conscientious men who had great influence over the army and the magistrature. These men adhered to the Prime Minister through a sentiment of honour, and in consequence of their monarchical principles. Amidst the disruption of parties, they recognised no other legitimate authority than that of the Queen Regent; but they desired as strongly, perhaps, as those of the opposite parties, that Mazarin should be got rid of. That odious foreigner exposed them all to the public animosity which pursued himself. Anne of Austria frequently employed the artifices of her

sex to avert their opposition in council, and calm their discontent.

The party of the Princes, which the success of the enemies of France, during their captivity, rendered from day to day more popular and interesting, was composed of all the young nobility. Of its apparent chiefs, the one alone capable of directing it was the Duke de Bouillon. But to lead a party it is necessary to identify oneself with it, and devote oneself to it wholly; and the Duke de Bouillon had views peculiar, foreign, and even adverse to the interests of his party; and before such interest he placed that of the maintenance, or rather elevation, of his own house. The Duchess de Longueville, the Princess de Condé, La Rochefoucauld, and Turenne had neither sufficient finesse nor skill in intrigue to be able to direct that party and struggle successfully against Mazarin; but they were seconded by three men who, although obscure, displayed in these circumstances extraordinary talent. Lenet,* who never quitted the Princess de Condé throughout these troubles, but served her faithfully with his pen and advice. Montreuil, who, although he had never published anything, was a member of the French Academy and secretary to the Prince de Condé. He managed, with infinite address, and incessantly devising new means, to correspond with the Princes, and bring the vigilance of their keepers in default. And it was Gourville especially, who, after having worn the livery of the Duke de la Rochefoucauld as his valet, had become his man of business, his confidant, and friend. It was Gourville who, under a heavy expression of countenance, concealed a most subtle, most acute, and fertile intelligence. Persuasive,

* His memoirs give reliable details of all that relates to the Condés at this period.

energetic, prompt, reflective; knowing how to gain an end by the direct road; or, under the eyes of those opposing, attaining it unperceived, by covert and tortuous ways. A man who never found himself in any situation, however desperate it might be, without having the confidence that he could extricate himself from it. Did the cleverest consider a position as lost? Gourville intervened, infused hope, promised to lend a hand to it, and success was immediately certain and defeat impossible.

Still Gourville was not, even on the score of ability, the foremost spirit of his party. The person who deserved that title was a woman—the celebrated Anne de Gonzagua, widow of Edward Prince Palatine. Through her proneness to gallantry, she did not escape the weakness of her sex; but through her imperturbable calmness in the midst of the most violent commotions, her elevated views, the depth of her designs, the accuracy and rapidity of her resolutions, and her skill in making everything conduce to a given end, she combined in its entire vigour the peculiar character of the statesman with the soul of a conspirator. She had been through life the intimate friend of the mother of Condé, and she now laboured with skill, wisdom, and perseverance for the liberation of the Princes. And such is the ascendency obtained by talent backed by an energetic will, that it was to her advice all the partisans of the Princes deferred; her hand that held the threads of their various intrigues. With her De Retz treated directly, and in the whole course of the negotiations she displayed a degree of penetration which baffled all the subtlety of the Coadjutor; and while she foiled his devices against herself, she directed them aright against their mutual opponents. By her activity and energy five or six separate treaties were drawn up and

signed between the different personages whose interests were concerned, each in general ignorant of his comrade's participation.

It would be presumptuous in any way to attempt, after Bossuet, a perfect portraiture of this lady, but it may be interesting to glance at the antecedents of her life up to this period.

Charles de Gonzagua-Cleves, Duke of Mantua and Nevers, had, by his marriage with Catherine of Lorraine, three daughters: the oldest, Maria, whom he preferred to the others, or rather that his pride sought to elevate her alone to the highest destiny possible, was married successively to two Kings of Poland, Ladislas Sigismond and Jean Casimir. The second, Anne, who, as the Princess Palatine, became the political opponent of Mazarin; and the third, Benedicte, who took the veil and died whilst yet very young at the steps of the altar. It is the romantic, agitated, and changeful existence of the second with which we are concerned: passed in tumult and ended in silence. In it may be found the invaluable lesson of that admirable antithesis afforded by error and repentance. Bossuet, in his eloquent, fervent oration upon the life of that princess, was enabled to derive from a contemplation of it the highest instruction. He has therein retraced, with an imposing authority, the errors of a woman exclusively engrossed, during many years, with worldly interests and earthly vanities, and also made the emphatic denial that, in their last hours, such awakened minds but rarely give themselves up without profound anguish, fitful emotion, and mortal struggle to the contemplation of imperishable joys. Anne de Gonzagua experienced those extremes. She passed from incredulity and an irregular life to the most lively faith and exemplary conduct.

Captivated in turn by earth and heaven, worldly and scorning the world, sceptical and fervent, she had long centred her pride and happiness in the political affairs of her epoch, until the day came when, wearied with ephemeral pleasures and touched by grace, she finally renounced the things of this life and gave herself wholly up to celestial meditation.

In her earliest youth she had been placed in the convent of Faremoustier, where nothing was neglected that could tend to inspire her with a desire for cloister life. Her father, the Duke of Mantua, had determined that his two younger daughters, Anne and Benedicte, should help, by taking the veil, to augment the fortune of their elder sister. Benedicte submitted to her fate, but Anne soon perceived what her father's plan was, and in her indignation she resolved to defeat it. Unlike her younger sister, she had an adventurous spirit, an ardent imagination, a strong desire to play an active part in life. Even to withdraw from a mode of existence that was hateful to her, she made her escape from Faremoustier, and went to confide to her sister's bosom, in the convent of Avenai, her wrath, her *ennui*, and her hopes. For awhile it seemed as though conventual life was about to exercise a strange fascination over her. The discourse and example of her sister touched deeply the youthful heart which had proved rebellious to a parent's will. It seemed not improbable that she would yield to persuasion that which she had refused to compulsion. But her destiny determined otherwise. Events cast her upon another course; her imperfect vocation yielded quickly to their influence. She had been worked upon, in the solitude of the cloister, by that mysterious yearning for an encounter with those struggles which human passions involve, the experience of which can alone extinguish such yearning in certain souls.

It was necessary that she should see the world, undergo its deceptions, and be wearied of it, in order to desire repose and be capable of appreciating the inestimable blessings of peace and silence and tranquillity.

The Duke of Mantua dying in 1637, Anne was obliged to leave the cloister on business connected with the paternal succession, and appeared at Court with Marie, her elder sister. The turmoil of the world and its sensuous enjoyments speedily engrossed the young and lovely princess, involved her in their trammels, and only restored her to tranquillity and solitude after a lapse of many years; for at this time she also lost her sister, the youthful abbess of Avenai, and the last link which attached Anne to cloister life was severed by that death. An absorbing passion, too, was destined to confirm her relinquishment of such vocation. The youthful Henri de Guise was then one of the most brilliant gentlemen at the French Court. Grandson of the *Balafré*, his high birth fixed the eyes of all upon him, at the same time that his impetuous imagination, his profession, all the aristocratic follies of the day—remarkable duels, romantic loves, eccentricities, the adventures and elegant habits of the *grand seigneur*—had constituted him an oracle of fashion and the hero of every festival. He was fascinated by the grace and beauty of Anne de Gonzagua, and she herself, in the midst of that gallant Court which masked a real depravation under the thin varnish of an ingenious subtlety of expression,—she herself, a disciple of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, where questions of sentiment were discussed, studied, and analysed incessantly, knew not how to resist the gilded accents of a young, handsome, and impassioned lover. She let him see that she loved him. He made her a promise of marriage, signed, it is said, with his blood; and the affair seemed to

promise a happy conclusion. But their mutual inclination was thwarted by Madame de Guise. The Duchess thought that the high dignities of the Church would procure greater wealth, honour, and power for her son than he could obtain in any other career: Henri was then Archbishop of Rheims. Nevertheless, he persisted in his love for Mademoiselle de Gonzagua, and in his design of espousing her. The overtures which he made to the Vatican were not in vain. He received from the Pope, with the authorisation to again become a layman, a dispensation which his kinship to Anne rendered necessary for the celebration of their nuptials. But the lovers did not hasten to avail themselves of such privilege, apparently through dread of Richelieu, who was also opposed to their union. Perhaps that minister, from whom nothing secret was hidden—not even the unshaped designs of the ambitious,—already suspected Henri de Guise of being favourably disposed to the interests of Spain, as well as contrary to those of France. Anne and Henri, therefore, contented themselves with the possibility which the complaisance of the Holy Father had given them of contracting an indissoluble bond, and with the oath by which they reciprocally pledged their faith. Confiding in the honour of the Prince whom she so ardently loved, Anne consented to follow him, when he quitted France in order to escape from the espionage of Richelieu. Disguising herself in male attire, Anne rejoined her lover at Besançon, according to Mademoiselle de Montpensier, at Cologne according to other writers; where, as elsewhere, she caused herself to be called "Madame de Guise"—writing and speaking of her husband, and defying the assurances which were constantly advanced of the illegality of a marriage secretly performed by a canon of Rheims in the private

chapel of the Hôtel de Nevers. But what are promises, marriage vows, or even bonds written in blood?

Henri not long after became unfaithful to the confiding Anne by eloping with a fair widow, the Countess de Bossut, whom he carried off to Brussels and ultimately married. Implicated in the conspiracy of the Count de Soissons, the turbulent churchman was present at the battle of Marfée, and consequently declared guilty of high treason. He therefore took up his abode in the Low Countries, where he quietly awaited the death of Louis XIII. and his minister, then both moribund, to resume his career at the Court of France.

Thus abandoned by her volatile lover, and extremely compromised, Mademoiselle de Gonzagua returned to Paris, where she reassumed the appellation of the Princess Anne. Her grief for awhile at her abandonment was great, but happily for Anne de Gonzagua, she was possessed of youth, and, as Madame de Motteville tells us, "of beauty and great mental attractions." She had moreover sufficient address to obtain a great amount of esteem, in spite of her errors. In a few years' time, during which she took care to avoid fresh scandal, whatever she might have done "under the rose," she made a tolerably good marriage. Her husband, her senior by two years only, was Prince Edward, Count Palatine of the Rhine, son of a king without a kingdom,—the elector Frederick,* chosen King of Bohemia in 1619, but who lost his crown in 1620, at the battle of Prague. Prince Edward, therefore, having no sovereignty, lived at the French Court. In 1645, then, Anne de Gonzagua found herself definitively

* This unfortunate Prince had married, in 1613, Elizabeth, daughter of James I. of England. The celebrated Prince Rupert and Sophia, Electress of Hanover, were among the other children.

settled at Paris, and it must be owned did not give Henri de Guise much cause to regret his faithlessness. The irregularities of the Princess Palatine became notorious, and assuredly Bossuet, in the funeral oration which he pronounced many years later, in the presence of one of her daughters and other relatives, whilst displaying a prodigal eloquence, and a mastery over all oratorical resource, made use of every artifice of speech, and all the elasticity of vague terms, in speaking of that period of her life without a violation of propriety, without disguising truths known to all, without exceeding either in blame or praise the limits imposed by good taste upon the reverend orator when he pronounces a panegyric upon those who not unfrequently have very little merited it.

During those stormy years of the civil wars, through her diplomatic talents, Anne de Gonzagua shone conspicuously in the front rank of female politicians. One can readily imagine what must have been, not in the first Fronde, all parliamentary as it was, but in the second, entirely aristocratic, in the Fronde of the Princes, the influence of a woman's mind at once so subtle and brilliant. It was then that Madame de Chevreuse, Madame de Montbazon, Madame de Longueville, and Mademoiselle de Montpensier, displayed upon the political stage the resources of their finesse, their dissimulation, or their courage. The Palatine did not fall below the level of those adventurous heroines. In the midst of those intrigues, of that puerile ambition, of those turnings and windings, perfidy, seduction, manœuvring promises, of those negotiations in which Mazarin infused all his Italian cunning, the Queen her feminine impatience and her Spanish dissimulation, De Retz his genius of artist-conspirator, Condé his pride of the prince and the conqueror,

Anne de Gonzagua handled political matters with a rare suppleness, humouring offended self-love, impatient ambition, haughty rivalries, acting as mediatrix with a wonderful amount of conciliatory tact, the friend of divers chiefs of parties, and meriting the confidence of all.

It would be tedious to relate here her various negotiations, to go over her discourses, conversations, and numerous letters: it would involve a history of the Fronde, and that is not our subject. It will suffice to say that she obtained the esteem of all parties at a time when parties not only hated but strangely defied each other, and that she manifested a skill, a tact which Cardinal de Retz—a good judge of such matters—does not hesitate to praise with enthusiasm. "I do not think," says he, "that Queen Elizabeth of England had more capacity for governing a state. I have seen her in faction, I have seen her in the cabinet, and I have found her in every respect equally sincere." This eulogium may be perhaps a little over-coloured. But Madame de Motteville, who also greatly admired the Palatine, probably approaches nearer to the truth. "This princess," she says, "like many other ladies, did not despise the conquests of her eyes, which were in truth very beautiful; but, besides that advantage, she had that which was of more value, I mean wit, address, capacity for conducting an intrigue, and a singular facility in finding expedients for succeeding in what she undertook." Thus spoke the Coadjutor and the Court of her. The parliamentary party, by the organ of the councillor Joly, confirms such panegyric: "She had so much intelligence, and a talent so peculiar for business, that no one in the world ever succeeded better than she did." The Princess Palatine's political dexterity cannot therefore be contested: the testimony of the most

opposite camps are thereupon agreed, and it is certain that, without the least exaggeration, it may be said that no one at that epoch, save Mazarin, better understood the resources of diplomacy.

It was especially after the arrest of the Princes that her zeal and intelligence found occasion to manifest themselves. Madame de Longueville, as has been said, instantly sought the aid of Anne de Gonzagua when she learned that her two brothers and her husband were prisoners. The news made her swoon, and her despair was afterwards pitiable. The Princess Palatine was touched by it, and promised to operate on behalf of the Princes. From that moment she became, without entering into faction and especially without failing in her duties towards a sovereign whom she loved, one of the most active friends of the prisoners. Meetings were held under her roof to deliberate upon that important affair, and, to compass her ends, she contrived to bring into play the most varied resources. She began by interesting in the Princes' destiny those even who might have been thought the most irreconcileable enemies to them. However difficult this work was of accomplishment, she reunited, as in a fasces, in a single will, personages widely separated upon other points, and surprised to find that they were pursuing the same object, for none of them knew the motives which influenced the actions of the rest. On this head, Bossuet says, with somewhat excessive laudation, she declared to the chiefs of parties how far she would bind herself, and she was believed to be incapable of either deceiving or being deceived. That is rather a hazardous assertion, for if she indeed aided in the liberation of the Princes, none of the promises she made—in all sincerity doubtless—became realised. But, says Bossuet further, and this time with

more precision, "her peculiar characteristic was to conciliate opposite interests, and, in raising herself above them, to discover the secret point of junction and knot, as it were, by which they might be united." She had resolved to win over the Duke d'Orleans, Madame de Chevreuse, De Retz, and the keeper of the seals, Chateauneuf. She therefore signed with them four different treaties. With the Duke d'Orleans she promised the hand of the young Duke d'Enghien in marriage to one of the Prince's daughters; to Madame de Chevreuse that of Mademoiselle de Chevreuse to the Prince de Conti; to De Retz, the cardinal's hat; to Chateauneuf, the post of prime minister. All consented to favour the princess's designs, and Mazarin, whom she could not convince, found himself surrounded by enemies whose union was formidable. That minister made allusion to the dread with which he was inspired when he remarked some years afterwards to Don Louis de Haro: "The most turbulent among the men does not give us so much trouble to keep him in check as the intrigues of a Duchess de Chevreuse or a Princess Palatine." In vain, according to his wont, did he again attempt to temporise. Anne de Gonzagua, who was ready to open fire with all her batteries, sought to terrify him by the perspective of a menacing future. "She caused him to be informed that he was lost if he did not determine upon giving the Princes their liberty, assuring him that if he did not do it promptly he would see, in a few days, the whole Court and every cabal banded against him, and that all aid would fail him." Mazarin, obstinate in his determination, and unwilling to believe that she had so thoroughly played her game as to hold in hand the threads of so many intrigues, begged her to defer the matter, asked time for reflection, and conducted himself in such a way in short that

the princess saw clearly that he only wanted to gain time. She therefore hesitated no longer, but allowed those who were agitating impatiently around her to commence action.

The party of the Princes had been dubbed by the name of the *New Fronde.* The old, although it had lost its energy by its union with the Court, preserved nevertheless its hatred to the prime minister. It was not in De Retz's power to neutralise wholly these hostile dispositions; but he could hinder them from being brought into dangerous activity. The Coadjutor at first with that view acted in good faith, and remained faithful in the first moments of the agreement which he had entered into with the Queen. Probably it might then have been possible to attach him finally to the Court party; but Mazarin could not believe that the Coadjutor, so fertile in tricks, so full of finesse, was capable of anything like frankness and generosity. In the practical experience of life, mistrust has its perils as well as blind confidence, and failure as often happens to us through our unwillingness to believe in virtue, as through our inability to suspect vice. Mazarin judged after himself a man who resembled him in many respects, but not in all. Moreover, he feared lest he might seek to win the Queen's affection from him; and that fear was not groundless. De Retz saw himself the object of the suspicions and afterwards of the machinations of a power which laboured at his destruction, whilst for that power he was compromising his influence and his popularity. To reacquire it, he hastened, therefore, to throw himself with all his adherents on the side of the Princes, and saw no safety but in their deliverance. This alliance of the two camps, so long enemies, was concluded between the Coadjutor and the Princess Palatine, and rendered so firm and secret by the confidence with which these two

party chiefs inspired each other, that Mazarin, who unceasingly dreaded such a union, and who always suspected it, did not know it for certain until it revealed itself by its effects.*

The parliament formed a fourth party. Not that that body was unanimous; but it had within itself an honourable majority which was alike inimical to the Frondeurs, the seditious, and the minister. The parliament therefore would have been disposed to unite itself to the Princes' party, and to lend it support; but to do so it would have been necessary that the chiefs of that party should renounce all alliance with the foreigner. Turenne and Madame de Longueville had joined with the Spaniards to fight against France. The young Princess de Condé, with the Dukes de Bouillon and de la Rochefoucauld, who had shut themselves up in Bordeaux, had entered into an alliance with them, and had received from them succour in the shape of money. The Spanish envoys in Paris conferred daily with the chiefs of the old as of the new Fronde.

Gaston, who might have been the moderator of all these parties, formed by himself a fifth among them. His irresolution prevented him giving strength to any other of the factions, but he constituted a formidable obstacle to all the rest. His inclination, as well as his interest, should never have made him deviate from the Court party; yet he was always opposed to it. Impelled by his jealousy of Condé and of the prime minister, he acted in a manner contrary to his own wishes. He was, however, neither wanting in intelligence nor finesse, nor even a certain kind of eloquence; and the master-stroke of De Retz's address was to have contrived, in furtherance of the object of his designs, to set

* Motteville—Joly—Lenet.

Gaston with the Fronde against the Princes, and afterwards for the Princes against Mazarin.

The complication and the multiplicity of parties was as nothing in comparison to that of private interests, which so crossed each other and in so many different ways, which turned with such mobility, that, in the ignorance which prevailed of the secret motives of the principal actors in that drama so vivid, motley, and turbulent, nothing could be predicated of what they would do, and a looker-on might have been disposed at times to have pronounced them as insensates, who were rather their own enemies than those of their antagonists.

If the libels of those times are to be credited, and especially the satire in verse for which the poet Marlet was sentenced to be hanged, the obstinacy with which the Queen exposed to danger her son's crown, by retaining a minister detested by all, would be naturally explained by a reason other than that of a reason of state. The advocate-general Talon, Madame de Motteville, and the Duchess de Nemours exculpate Anne of Austria on this head. They are three respectable and trustworthy witnesses; and, without any doubt, that which they said they thought. But the Duchess d'Orleans, Elizabeth-Charlotte, affirms in her correspondence * that Anne of Austria had secretly married Cardinal Mazarin, who was not a priest. She says that all the details of the marriage were known, and that, in her time, the back staircase in the Palais Royal was pointed out by which at night Mazarin reached the Queen's apartments. She observes that such clandestine marriages were common at that period, and cites that of the widow of our Charles the First, who secretly espoused her

* Mém. sur la Cour de Louis XIV. et de la Régence, d'Elizabeth-Charlotte Duchesse d'Orléans, Mère du Regent. 1823, p. 319.

equerry, Jermyn. One might be disposed to think that the Duchess Elizabeth-Charlotte could have only followed some tradition, and that her assertions cannot counterbalance the statements of the contemporary personages above mentioned. But certain species of facts are often better known long after the death of the persons to whom they relate, than during their lifetime, or at a time close upon their decease; they are not entirely unveiled until there no longer exists any motive to keep them secret. Of the Queen's sentiments towards Mazarin there can be no doubt after reading a letter which she addressed to him under date of June 30, 1660, which is extant in autograph,* the avowal she made to Madame de Brienne in her oratory,† the confidences of Madame de Chevreuse to Cardinal de Retz.‡ Moreover, whatever may have been the motives of Anne of Austria's attachment to Mazarin, it is certain that they were all-powerful over her. She lent herself to every project formed by her minister for the increase of his power and fortune. The war in Bordeaux was kindled because Mazarin desired that one of his nieces should be united to the Duke de Candale, son of the Duke d'Epernon; and, in order not to let the Swiss soldiers march thither without their pay, when their aid was most necessary, Anne of Austria put her diamonds in pledge, and would not allow Mazarin to be answerable for the sum required to be disbursed.

* MS. Bibliothèque Nationale.

† Leomeni de Brienne, Memoirs, 1828.

‡ Retz, Memoirs, edition 1836.

CHAPTER II.

THE YOUNG PRINCESS DE CONDÉ CONDUCTS THE WAR IN THE SOUTH.

To generous and feeling hearts, Condé's misfortune presented all the characteristics of a real romance. The majority of the women therefore who meddled with politics were, through sympathy, of his party. The glory of France under lock and key! The young hero arrested for treason, and prisoner to whom? The foreign Cardinal Mazarin. All the spoils of the Condés distributed amongst the *sbires* of the favourite,—Normandy to Harcourt, Champagne to L'Hospital, &c. A monstrous alliance between King and people. The Queen keeping the Bastille in the hands of Broussel's son—the highest posts bestowed upon the magistrates—a reversal, in fact, of everything. Did not the French nobility rise to a man against such a state of things?

No, everything was at a standstill. Neither Condé's military clients, nor his numerous seigniories, nor his governments took any active part whatsoever. Far from it, Madame de Longueville, as we have seen, who thought to raise Normandy, everywhere met with a repulse in that province. Neither Turenne nor she could do anything save by accepting aid from Spain, for which Madame de Bouillon was also doing her best in Paris.

But whilst that lovely amazon, Condé's sister, was occupied

in her endeavours to lure the hero of Stenay into the party of revolt by intoxicating him with love, and wasting time in negotiation and parade, a succour more direct and much more energetic was given to Condé from a quarter he had the least expected—from his own chateau of Chantilly. He had there left his aged mother, his young wife, and a son seven years old. Mazarin hesitated to have these ladies arrested, fearing the force of public opinion. The mother went to hide herself in Paris, and one morning appeared before the Parliament, suppliant, weeping sorely, stooping so far as to kneel in prayer, to flattery, and even to falsehood. All being unavailing, she went home to die.

But most astonishing was the unexpected courage of Condé's young wife, Claire Clemence de Maillé, that despised niece of Richelieu, whom the victorious soldier had married under compulsion, and whose heir was the son of the minister's absolute will. On the arrest of her husband she had been confided to the care of a man of capacity—Lenet, from whose "Memoirs" we have already cited. He at first conducted her and her son in safety from Chantilly to Montrond, a stronghold of the Condés, but fearing to be besieged in it, straightway to Bordeaux. The Parliament of Guienne had had a deadly quarrel with Mazarin for imposing upon them Epernon, a governor they detested, and whom the Cardinal was bent upon allying by marriage with his own family. Great therefore was the emotion of this city and parliament at seeing that young lady of two-and-twenty in deep mourning, with her innocent boy, who caught the brave Bordelais by their beards with his little hands, and besought their help towards the liberation of his father. The Princess's retinue enhanced not a little this

favourable impression, formed as it was of high-born women, for the most part young and charming.

The popular explosion was lively, as always happens among the people of the south. But even the narrative of Lenet shows clearly the slender foundation upon which this semblance of popular insurrection rested. The lower orders, then living in great misery, hoped to obtain through the Princess some opening for their foreign trade, which would better enable them to dispose of their wines and help them to live. Mazarin kept down the local Parliament, and carried everything through sheer terror. Bouillon and La Rochefoucauld, the Princess's advisers, recommended that a royal envoy should be cut to pieces. Lenet dreaded lest such an act, somewhat over-energetic, might render his mistress less popular. Twice or thrice the populace were very nearly putting the Parliament to the sword, the majority of which was kept under through sheer terror of the knife. Spain promised money, and they had the simplicity to believe her. She hardly gave them a pitiful alms. Meanwhile, however, Mazarin, having quietly occupied Normandy and Burgundy, made his way towards Guienne with the royal army. The Bordelais showed an intrepid front, though somewhat disquieted to see the soldiery about to gather the fruits of the vintage instead of themselves. The Princess only maintained herself in the place through the aid of the rabble *va-nu-pieds*, who feasted and danced all night at her expense, and who shouted in her ears a hundred ribald jests against Mazarin, compelling both herself and her son to repeat them. This abasement into which she had fallen made her desire peace for herself, and permission to leave the city, which was granted to her, with vague promises of liberating Condé (3rd October, 1650).

The Duchess de Bouillon had been quite as ardent in politics during the burlesque activity of the Fronde as Madame de Longueville; and although, perhaps, equally beautiful, happily she was entirely devoted to her domestic duties. Her husband on taking flight had been constrained to leave her behind in Paris, she being near her accouchement, which circumstance however did not prevent the Queen from giving an order for her arrest. Although the royal guards were already in the house, the Duchess contrived to effect the escape of her sons, and during that same day gave birth to her babe. Shortly afterwards she found a means of eluding the guard set over her, and would have rejoined her husband, had her daughter not been attacked with small-pox, but having returned home to nurse her, was arrested at her bedside and carried to the Bastille. The Duchess de Chevreuse, always gallant, in spite of waning beauty, constituted herself the mediatrix between the Queen and the *Frondeurs;* and although her daughter had openly become the mistress of the Coadjutor, it was already contemplated to make her the wife of the Prince de Conti, as a condition of the arrangement by which he should be set free. Beaufort still continued to be the obsequious lover of Madame de Montbazon, and, through her, Mazarin was kept well acquainted with all his secrets.

No other power than that of female influence could have attached the French nobility to the Prince de Condé, and determined it to take up arms for his release. In fact, his hauteur, his brusquerie, his brutality even, had, in repeated instances, offended that body, and the Queen imagined that the bulk of the French gentry would witness his arrest with as much pleasure as the citizens. But the women had been fascinated by the *éclat* of his four victories; they agreed to

call him the champion, the hero of France, and it seemed to them that they shared his heroism in devoting themselves to his cause. As for the higher nobility, they were not bound by any political principle; they were very indifferent to the grandeur of France; very ignorant of its pretensions in foreign affairs, or to what it had been pledged with other nations. They loved war in the first place for its dangers, and in the second for the honours and wealth they got by fighting; but even in the army, far from making fidelity and obedience a rule of conduct, they cherished a spirit of independence and resistance to the Crown, and would only allow themselves to be influenced by their chivalric usages. They gloried in showing themselves reckless of the future, caring more about the glitter of the present than steady progressive advancement; equally prodigal of fortune as of life, they were prone to follow impulse rather than calculation; so that what we should perhaps call a reckless frivolity was looked upon by them as a sentiment invested with all the charm of brilliant gallantry. Those even whom neither their affection nor their interest summoned to the standards of the captive Princes, rushed gaily from the midst of their ease and festivity into civil war at the first prompting of their mistresses.

Gaston d'Orleans, after having consented to the imprisonment of the Princes, only decided upon entering into the project for their deliverance under promise of a marriage of his daughter, the Duchess d'Alençon, with the boy-Duke d'Enghien, Condé's son. Turenne and La Rochefoucauld, too, often thought less of their glory or the success of their party, than of what might be agreeable to the Duchess de Longueville, of whose love they were so envious. More obscure *liaisons*, which have even escaped the anecdotic

abundance of the memoir-writers of those days, appear also to have exercised their influence over the conduct of the highest personages. In a letter which De Retz wrote to Turenne, and which he frankly characterises as being remarkably silly, the Coadjutor does not disguise that amongst many serious motives which he gives that great warrior for inducing him to determine upon peace, he does not forget to hold out a hope of his seeing once more a little grisette of the Rue des Petits-Champs, whom Turenne loved with all his heart. The feeblest motives had influence over such men, all young and ardent as they were—the followers of different factions, though without prejudices, principles, convictions, without hatred and without affection. The women therefore naturally played important parts in all these events, to whom the species of gallantry and worship of beauty held in honour by the Hôtel de Rambouillet was quite familiar. Thus nothing could be expected of the Duke de Beaufort, even in that which concerned him closest, if not assured previously of the consent of the Duchess de Montbazon, who exercised plenary power over him. Nemours, enamoured of the Duchess de Chatillon, loved likewise by the Prince de Condé, warmly embraced the cause of that Prince, because his mistress prompted him thereto; and the Duchess de Nemours had moved heaven and earth to obtain Condé's deliverance, in the hope that he would keep sharp watch over the Duchess de Chatillon, and put a stop to her husband's infidelity.

De Retz too, notwithstanding the superiority of his intellect, allowed himself to give way, through his inclination for the fair sex, to the commission of indiscretions and imprudences which often placed his life in danger, and caused his best-concerted measures to prove abortive. To appease the

jealousy of Mademoiselle de Chevreuse he permitted himself to make use of a contemptuous expression concerning the Queen, which was repeated, and which became the cause of the violent hatred she ever afterwards bore him. The Princess de Guémenée, furious at having been abandoned, offered the Queen, if she would consent to it, to procure the disappearance of the Coadjutor by sending him an invitation, and then having him confined in a cellar of her hotel. De Retz learned that a design to assassinate him had been formed, and whenever he repaired to the Hôtel de Chevreuse, by way of precaution placed sentinels outside the gate of that mansion, and quite close to the Queen's sentries who guarded the Palais-Royal, without heeding the effect such an excess of insolence and scandal produced. With every kind of talent fitting to dominate party spirit, he failed to acquire the confidence of anyone. He regarded all alliance with the foreigner as odious and impolitic; and notwithstanding, when his embarrassments increased, he lent an ear to the Archduke's envoy, and even to that of Cromwell. At the same time, full of admiration for the Marquis of Montrose, whom he called a hero worthy of Plutarch, he contracted the closest friendship with the Scottish royalist, and aided him to the utmost of his ability in the efforts he was making to restore to the throne the legitimate King of Great Britain. De Retz, in few words, appeared anxious to show himself as taking pleasure in exhausting every kind of contrast. When the intricate plot of the drama in which he was engaged had become so complicated by his intrigues, that he no longer saw the possibility of unravelling it, he sought means to retire from the situation with the greatest advantage practicable for himself and friends, and to obtain the Cardinal's hat. The

marriage of Mademoiselle de Chevreuse with the Prince de Conti became the essential condition of all the negotiations which he carried on, whether with the Court or with the Duchess de Chevreuse. The remembrance of an old and close friendship, the habit of a familiarity contracted in youth, gave the Duchess de Chevreuse a means of influence over that Queen, so fixed in her hatred, so inconstant in her friendships. Anne of Austria, who then, moreover, found herself very miserable through the obstacles which so many factions created, had partially restored the Duchess to her confidence. Madame de Chevreuse appeared also to have the same interests as De Retz, since, like him, she desired intensely the union of her daughter with a Prince of the blood. But she had large sums of money to recover from the Government, and the success of her claims depended on the decision of the prime minister. She therefore used her utmost tact with Mazarin, negotiating at the same time with him, as well as with the Old and the New Fronde. She turned to her own profit the influence that her connections at Court, with the Coadjutor, and with the Princes gave her in all the several factions. She was assisted in her intrigues by the Marquis de Laignes, a man of courage but little intellect, who, from the time of her exile at Brussels, had declared himself her lover in order to gain importance in the faction of the Fronde, which he had embraced. As little more of the attractions of her youth were left to Madame de Chevreuse, save their pristine celebrity, she had not always to congratulate herself upon the good humour and behaviour of De Laignes. The latter had been until then wholly devoted to the Coadjutor; but De Retz soon perceived that De Laignes entered into projects different from his own. At length, to have some one who could be responsible to him

for Madame de Chevreuse, he endeavoured to substitute Hacqueville as a go-between in the place of De Laignes. Hacqueville was the intimate friend of De Retz and also of Madame de Sevigné; and seconded by Madame de Chevreuse and Madame de Rhodes, De Retz might have succeeded in the expulsion of Laignes, if Hacqueville would have consented to that project. No man could be more obliging than Hacqueville; but, notwithstanding the disposition he showed to be useful to his friends, he shrank from such continual immolation of himself. Probably also he was too honest a man to lend himself to such a procedure.

Madame de Sevigné,—in every way qualified to play a distinguished part in the exciting game of politics,—was so entirely devoted to her husband and children as to be a stranger to all these intrigues; but she was more or less connected with the persons who seconded the Coadjutor's projects, and consequently with the Duchess de Chevreuse. An article in the "Muse Historique" of Loret shows how intimate was the connection of Madame de Sevigné with that Duchess. In the month of July, 1850, on returning from a promenade in the Cours, then the fashionable drive among the highest society, the Marquis and Marchioness de Sevigné gave a splendid supper to the Duchess de Chevreuse. The noisy manner in which the Frondeurs expressed their delight made this nocturnal repast almost assume the character of an orgie; and, for that reason, it became for awhile the talk of the capital. The rhyming gazetteer thus expresses himself on the subject:

> On fait ici grand' mention
> D'une belle collation

Qu'à la Duchesse de Chevreuse
Sevigné, de race frondeuse,
Donna depuis quatre ou cinq jours,
Quand on fut revenue du Cours.
On y vit briller aux chandelles
Des gorges passablement belles ;
On y vit nombre de galants ;
On y mangea des ortolans ;
On chanta des chansons à boire ;
On dit cent fois non—oui—non, voire.
La Fronde, dit-on, y claqua ;
Un plat d'argent on escroqua ;
On repandit quelque potage,
Et je n'en sais pas davantage.*

It will be seen from these details, that already the manners and customs of the great world reflected the licence of the civil wars, and that they no longer resembled those of which the Hôtel de Rambouillet still presented a purer model. It may be possible also that there was some exaggeration in Loret's description: he belonged to the Court party, received a pension of two hundred crowns from Mazarin, and detested the Fronde. His rhyming gazette was addressed to his protectress, Mademoiselle de Longueville, so much the more opposed to the Fronde that her stepmother was the heroine of that faction. Mademoiselle de Longueville, whose harsh strictures upon the Condé family have been cited, and who subsequently became the wife of the Duke de Nemours, is often mentioned in the writings of her time, although she was never mixed up in any political intrigue, nor took part in any event. Her immense fortune, the clearness of her judgment, the elevation of her sentiments, her grand airs, the severe dignity of her manners, and the energy of her character, constituted her during the Regency and the long

* Loret, Muse Historique, liv. i., p. 28, Letter 10.

reign of Louis XIV. a personage quite apart; who submitted herself to no influence whatever, social or political, and who no more permitted that absolute monarch to induce her to vary in her determinations, than to change the fashion of her external habiliments.

CHAPTER III.

STATE OF PARTIES ON THE LIBERATION OF THE PRINCES—THE CARDS AGAIN SHUFFLED, AND THE FACE OF THE SITUATION CHANGED.

At the commencement of 1651 all France clamoured for Condé's liberation. During the autumn Mazarin had led the Queen and the young King against Bordeaux, then held by the Princess de Condé, carrying—as usual when forced to use both means—a sword in one hand and a roll of parchment in the other. Failing to carry the place with the first, the Cardinal began to negotiate a treaty of peace, the principal item of which was full pardon to the citizens, and by others an agreement that the Princess and her son should retire to Montrond: on these terms the city yielded to its sovereign. The Cardinal also obtained a victory in the field against Turenne, who had entered the service of Spain and fired upon the fleur-de-lis. But with this momentary success of Mazarin's cause rose his pretensions and demands; and the Fronde, alarmed at his recovered authority, changed its tactics as its Protean genius De Retz frequently did his clothes—his cassock for a plumed hat and military cloak. It demanded the trial or liberation of the prisoners it had helped to send to Vincennes, without delay, and Mazarin removed them for safe custody to Havre. It then pronounced sentence of banishment on the obnoxious

minister, and ordered him to quit the kingdom within fifteen days. The town militia kept watch and ward over the Queen, by the command of the Coadjutor, and hindered her flight to join the favourite. She could offer no further resistance to those who now called themselves the friends of Condé, but who were the very same persons who had fought him in the field a few months before. Orders were given to set the captives at liberty. Mazarin himself went to Havre to communicate the news of their freedom, and was received by them with the contempt that he might have expected. Condé took leave of the Cardinal with a ringing peal of laughter, and with joyous acclamations, and bonfires, and firing of guns, made his triumphal entry into Paris.

Condé was now master of the situation. He found himself equally courted by the two other chief parties into which the State was divided—the Queen's, supported by the Duke de Bouillon, and the now repentant and pardoned Turenne—and the Fronde, which had fallen into the guidance of the Duke d'Orleans, the Coadjutor, and the Duchess de Chevreuse. His own was called "the Prince's," and comprised Rochefoucauld and other personal friends and military admirers. The Duke d'Orleans had gone on before to meet Condé as far as the plain of St. Denis, accompanied by the two most conspicuous representatives of the Fronde, the Duke de Beaufort and Retz, with the Coadjutor of Paris, and there they all warmly embraced. The Duke, having taken the Prince into his carriage, brought him in great pomp to the Palais Royal to salute the Queen Regent and the young King, and thence to the Palais d'Orleans, where he was feasted magnificently. Some days afterwards (February 25th) a royal ordonnance recognised the innocence of the Princes Condé, Conti, and

the Duke de Longueville, and reinstated them in all their posts and governments. On the 27th this ordonnance was confirmed in Parliament amidst loud cheers. Condé thus found himself at the highest degree of power to which a subject could reach. Misfortune had enhanced his military glory; a long captivity, endured with an unalterable serenity and high-hearted gaiety, had carried his popularity to the highest pitch. He was the victor, and, as it were, the designated heir, of Mazarin, who had fled before him, and with difficulty found a refuge without the kingdom, on the banks of the Rhine.

Thus, Anne of Austria in some sort a prisoner, and Mazarin proscribed, the nobility showed itself entirely devoted to the young hero whom it recognized as its chief. Some among them at once proposed that the Queen Mother should be confined in the Val-de-Grace, and that the Prince should himself assume the Regency, others talked even of raising him to the throne, but Condé did not fail to perceive that his newly acquired power was not so solid as it was sought to make him believe.

Meanwhile, Mazarin having quitted Havre, and the inhabitants of Abbeville refusing him passage through their town, he found an asylum for a few days at Dourlens; but he was soon driven thence by the proceedings of the Parliament against him. He then retired to Sedan, where he took counsel with his friend Fabert, whom he had appointed Commandant there. He next proceeded to Cologne, being treated with the utmost distinction and hospitality in all the foreign towns through which he passed.

Even in banishment, however, the old influence began to work. The Cardinal from his place of retirement governed the Queen with as absolute a sway as ever, and recom-

mended her, as a keen stroke of policy which would neutralize all parties, to take the young King to a *Bed of Justice*, and cause him to declare his majority. Couriers were going daily between Paris and Cologne; treaties between the Fronde and Mazarin were intercepted or forged, and published in the capital; the post of Prime Minister remained unfilled, and the Duke de Mercœur, notwithstanding all the thunders of Parliament, set out for Bruhl, with the purpose of marrying Mazarin's niece. Everything announced that the exile of that hated minister was but temporary, and Condé, perceiving the object of all these moves, prepared for war, and silently took his measures accordingly.

The nobility, who, from the beginning of February, had begun to assemble in order to take part in the expulsion of Mazarin, now held their meetings in the monastery hall of the Cordeliers, where might be seen collected together as many as *eight hundred* princes, dukes, and noblemen, heads of the most considerable houses in France, all partisans of Condé. As this numerical strength of the ennobled classes, together with the multiplicity of titles among them, is somewhat startling to a youthful English student, it may be well to remark that France had, in fact, three aristocracies in the course of her annals from the Crusades to the reign of Louis XIV. After the time of Louis XI., the representatives of the *first*, or old feudal aristocracy, the descendants of the men who were in reality the King's peers, and not his actual subjects, were few and far between. These were the holders of vast principalities, who maintained a kind of royal state in their own possessions, and kept high courts of judicature over life and limb in the whole extent of their hereditary fiefs. In the long English wars, from Crécy to Agincourt, the great body of them dis-

appeared, and only here and there a great vassal was to be seen, distinguished in nothing from the other nobles, except in the loftiness of his titles and the reverence that still clung to the sound of his historic name. The *second* aristocracy arose among the descendants of the survivors of the English and Italian wars. They claimed their rank, not as coming down to them from the tenure of almost independent counties and dukedoms, but as proprietors of ancestral lands, to which originally subordinate rights and duties had been attached. Mixed with those, we saw the Noblesse of the Robe, as the great law officers were called, who constituted a parallel but not identical nobility with their lay competitors. The *third* aristocracy was now about to make its appearance, the creation of Court favour, and badge of personal or official service—possessors of a nominal rank without any corresponding duty—a body selected for ornament, and not for use—and incorporating with itself, not only the marquis and viscount, fresh from the mint of the minister or favourite, but the highest names in France.

The aristocracy of the sword, and of ancient birth, had itself to blame for this degradation. Great alterations in manners or government—such as give a new character to human affairs—always seem brought about by some strange relaxation of morals, or atrocity of conduct, which makes society anxious for the change. The unfortunate custom in France which gave every male member of a noble family a title equivalent to that of its chief, so that a simple viscount with ten stalwart and penniless sons gave ten stalwart and penniless viscounts to the aristocracy of his country, had filled the whole land with a race of men proud of their origin, filled with reckless courage, careless of life, and despising all honest means of employment by which their

fortunes might have been improved. Mounted on a sorry steed and begirt with a sword of good steel, the young cavalier took his way from the miserable castle on a rock, where his noble father tried in vain to keep up the appearance of daily dinners, and wondered how in the world all his remaining sons and daughters were to be clothed and fed, and made his way to Paris. There he pushed his fortune—fighting, bullying, gambling, and was probably stabbed by some drunken companion and flung into the Seine. If he was lucky or adroit enough, he stabbed his drunken friend and pushed *him* into the stream; and, after a few months of suing and importunity, obtained a saddle in the King's Guards, or a pair of boots in the Musqueteers. At this time it came out that in twenty years of the reign of Louis XIII. there had been eight thousand fatal duels in different parts of the realm. Out of the duels which were daily carried on, four hundred in each year had ended in the death of one of the combatants. When the fiercest of English wars is shaking every heart in the kingdom, there would be wailing and misery in every house if it were reported that four hundred officers had been killed in a year. Yet these young desperadoes were all of officer's rank, and the quarrel in which they fell was probably either dishonourable or contemptible. Men fought and killed each other for a word or a look, or a fashion of dress, or the mere sake of killing. Where morality is loosened to the extent of a disregard of life, we may be sure the general behaviour in other respects is equally to be deplored. There was great and almost universal depravity in the conduct of high and low. Vice and sensuality found refuge and protection even in the presence of princesses and queens. People residing in remote places heard only of the gorgeous licence

in which the great and powerful lived. They knew them only during their visits to their ancestral homes as worn-out debauchees from the great city, who brought the profligacy of the purlieus of the Louvre into the peaceful cottages of the peasantry on their estates. It was, indeed, so much the fashion to be wicked, that a gentleman was hindered from the practice of his Christian or social duties by the fear of ridicule. The life of man, therefore, and the honour of woman were held equally cheap; and the blinded, rash, and self-indulgent nobility laid the foundation, in contempt of the feelings of its inferiors and neglect of their interests, for the terrible retribution which even now at intervals might be seen ready to take its course.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DUCHESSES DE LONGUEVILLE AND DE CHEVREUSE AND THE PRINCESS PALATINE IN THE LAST FRONDE.—RESULTS OF THE RUPTURE OF THE MARRIAGE PROJECTED BETWEEN THE PRINCE DE CONTI AND MADEMOISELLE DE CHEVREUSE.

We must now revert to Condé's heroic sister. Having glanced somewhat hastily at the brilliant part played by Madame de Longueville in the two first epochs of the Fronde, the war of Paris and that which illuminated the prison of Condé, we are now about to follow her through the third and last period, which commences from the deliverance of the Princes, in February, 1651, and only ends with the war of Guienne, in August, 1653;—the longest, the most disastrous, and at the same time most obscure epoch of the civil war. It will be necessary to strip the mask from more than one illustrious actor in it, exhibit the reverse of the most showy medals, and the shadows which everywhere mingle with glory, genius, and even virtue itself. The character of the Duchess de Longueville has its charming, its sublime aspects; but, alas! it is far from being irreproachable. In dwelling upon the least favourable portion of her life, we shall often do well to remember that the errors of great minds sometimes subserve their perfection, by the beneficent virtue of the remorse to which they give rise, and that the sister of the Great Condé must probably

have felt in all its fulness the vanity of ambition and of false grandeur, all the bitterness of guilty passions, in taking an early farewell of them, to resume the austere path of duty, to return, in fine, to Carmel and ascend to Port Royal.

Madame de Longueville had remained at Stenay with Turenne for some time after her brother's and husband's liberation, both occupied in disengaging themselves from the engagements which they had contracted with Spain for the deliverance of the Princes, and with negotiating a truce calculated to clear the way for the much-desired general peace. Recalled by the pressing instances of her family, she had quitted Stenay on the 7th of March, before the completion of her work. On arriving in Paris "universal applause greeted her heroic deeds." Monsieur had hastened to pay her a visit with Mademoiselle Montpensier, and a train of ladies of the highest distinction. She went afterwards that same day to present her homage to their Majesties, from whom she met with the most gracious reception. That moment was, unquestionably, the most brilliant of her whole career. In 1647, after the embassy to Munster, her return to France and its Court had been also a veritable triumph, as we have attempted to show; but the power of her house and the glory of her brother constituted nearly all the merits of it. She only contributed thereto the influence of her wit and beauty. After Stenay, the *éclat* which surrounded her was in some sort more personal. She had just displayed eminent qualities which raised her almost to the level of Condé. In Normandy she had exhibited herself as an intrepid adventuress, and a skilful politician in the Low Countries. When, during the imprisonment of her two brothers and her husband, her sister-in-law, the Princess de

Condé, had been forced at Bordeaux to recognize the royal authority, she discovered that the destinies of her house had devolved upon her. She had become the head of a great party. She had treated as from power to power with Spain; her word had appeared a sufficient guarantee to the Archduke Leopold and to the Count de Fuensaldagne. She had held in hand such commanders as Turenne, La Moussaye, Bouteville; and when, after the battle of Rethel, she seemed to be on the very verge of destruction, she had succeeded in recovering the advantage, and in contributing more than any one else to the deliverance of the Princes, thanks to the profound negotiations carried on in her name by the Princess Palatine. Whilst statesmen estimated her capacity, the multitude admired her courage and constancy. She was, in short, in possession of that political rôle with which La Rochefoucauld had dazzled her gaze in order to conceal his own designs:—a glittering chimera which, mingling itself with that of love, had seduced that ardent and haughty soul of hers. She was then the idol of Spain, the terror of the Court, one of the grandeurs of her family. We shall soon see whether she can better sustain this new ordeal than she did the first, at the close of the year 1647.

The Fronde gathered the fruit of its skilful conduct during the month of January, 1651. It was that faction which, silencing its old animosities and promptly extending its hand to the partisans of Condé, had extricated him from prison, in order to acquire and place at its head, together with the King's uncle, the lieutenant-general of the Kingdom, the first prince of the blood, the victor of Rocroi and Lens, the hero of the age. It carried everything before it —at Court, in parliament, upon the public places; it had proscribed and put to flight Mazarin; it held Anne of Aus-

tria a captive in her palace; already even it had penetrated into the cabinet in the person of the aged Chateauneuf, in whom ambition cherished beneath the snows of winter the vigour of youth, and whose capacity was scarcely inferior to his ambition. The moment had arrived for accomplishing the work already begun, and for putting into execution the plan determined upon between the Princess Palatine and Madame de Chevreuse.

Those two strong-minded women had conceived the idea of a grand aristocratic league which should seat the Fronde upon an union of all the interests which it comprised, close the avenues of France and the Court to Mazarin, and under the auspices of the Duke d'Orleans and the Prince de Condé form a government into which the friends of both should enter, the most accredited representatives of every fraction of a party. Further, the basis of this plan was that of a double marriage: on the one side between the young Duke d'Enghien and one of the Duke d'Orleans' daughters, on the other between the Prince de Conti and the daughter of Madame de Chevreuse.* This latter marriage might be accomplished immediately. Condé had accepted the proposition without any difficulty. Madame de Longueville, far from opposing it at Stenay, had embraced the idea of it with so much ardour that, in a letter to the Palatine of the 26th of November, 1650, after having weighed the different resolutions to be taken, she stops at this latter, and concludes thus: "*this, therefore, is what we must stick to.*" That marriage was, in short, of a supreme

* Retz himself has taken care to inform us of his sad *liaison* with Mademoiselle de Chevreuse, throughout the whole of the second volume and beginning of the third of his Memoirs. Amsterdam edition, 1731. That unfortunate lady died suddenly of a fever, unmarried, in 1652. She was born in 1627.

importance: it gave the house of Condé to the Fronde for ever, and the Fronde to the house of Condé; for the Fronde was then Madame de Chevreuse. She disposed, by her daughter, of the Coadjutor, who in his turn disposed of the Duke d'Orleans, and by him of the parliament. It was Madame de Chevreuse who, in 1650, had emboldened Mazarin to lay his hand upon Condé, in making him see that he might strike that bold stroke with impunity, since she answered to him for the secret connivance of the Duke d'Orleans and the parliament, who were alone able to oppose it. Here, Mazarin had committed an immense blunder: seeing himself delivered from Condé, by the aid of the Fronde, having nothing more hostile to cope with than the latter, he had imagined himself able to turn round upon it, and had treated Madame de Chevreuse very cavalierly, who, growing cold towards the Cardinal, and no longer finding it to her account to serve him, had lent an ear to the propositions of Condé's friends, and had procured his release from prison, reconciling to him the Duke d'Orleans and the parliament, which at first she had stirred up against him. She brought, moreover, to the house of Condé the most politic mind of the Fronde, an audacity towering to the height of his designs, a consummate experience, with the support of her three powerful families, the houses of de Rohan, de Luynes, and Lorraine. She rendered sure the alliance of the Duke d'Orleans and the Prince de Condé, and completed the ruin of Mazarin by constructing a strong government which probably might have succeeded ultimately in triumphing over the affection of the Queen. She held in hand a statesman bred in the school of Richelieu, and whom she judged capable of replacing Mazarin, the former Keeper of the Seals—Châteauneuf, already a member of the Cabinet. She

believed herself certain of acquiring De Retz by means of the Cardinal's hat. She had not the least objection to make to the elevation of the friends of Condé, and she was ready to favour the ambition of La Rochefoucauld, for whom formerly, in 1643, she had so greatly importuned the Queen and Mazarin. Add to all this, that on quitting the citadel of Havre, the young Prince de Conti had not beheld the lovely Charlotte de Lorraine without being smitten with her charms, and he himself strongly desired that marriage. Who, then, prevented it? Who broke off the contracted engagement? Who struck at and wounded by the self-same blow the Palatine and Madame de Chevreuse? Who restored them both and for ever to the Queen and Mazarin? Who destroyed the Fronde by dividing it? We shall find out by-and-by, but let us merely say just now that it was the rupture of that marriage which again shuffled the cards and changed the face of the situation. In pitting against himself those who had so powerfully succoured him in his misfortune, Condé ought at least to have drawn closer to the Court and had a serious understanding with the Queen; but he tergiversated, and at the end of some months of that wavering policy, he found himself standing unmasked between the Court and the Fronde, both equally discontented with him, repeating and exaggerating the blunder committed by Mazarin. The greatest error during the course of a revolution is to believe that the support of either of the parties who are in actual collision may be dispensed with. At the close of a revolution the attempt to dominate may be tried; during the crisis a choice must be made. Mazarin had fallen through having tried to dominate the Fronde and Condé at one and the same time; Condé lost himself in thinking to dominate the Fronde and the Court.

It is an historical problem very difficult to solve, as to who was the author of the rupture of the marriage projected between the Prince de Conti and Mademoiselle de Chevreuse. We are well inclined to believe that that individual at any rate was the chief author of the rupture to whom it was the most profitable. The Queen and Mazarin, who from his place of retirement governed her with as absolute a sway as ever, saw from the first the danger which threatened them from such an alliance, entirely unexpected as it was by both. The negotiations between Madame de Chevreuse, while Condé was prisoner, and Madame de Longueville at Stenay, had been conducted by the Palatine with such consummate skill and perfect secrecy that neither the Queen nor Mazarin had the slightest suspicion of them. When the rumour reached the ears of the Cardinal in his retreat at Bruhl, near Cologne, he broke out against Madame de Chevreuse with a violence the coarseness of which even was an involuntary homage rendered to the profound ability of Marie de Rohan. The Queen showed herself warmly opposed to it, and the ministers were ordered to thwart in every way the projected alliance. They began, therefore, to negotiate with Condé. As a result of these negotiations he obtained in exchange for his government of Burgundy that of Guienne, one of far greater importance; he was even led to indulge a hope that Provence would be given to the Prince de Conti instead of Champagne and La Brie, and the port and fortress of Blaye to La Rochefoucauld in augmentation of his government of Poitou, although there was not the slightest intention of fulfilling that hope. So states the Duchess de Nemours, the enemy of the Fronde and the Condés, and who, having given herself to the Court party, must have well known its intentions. De Retz likewise

doubts not that the Queen combated an alliance so evidently opposed to her interests. Madame de Motteville, the Queen's close friend, avows it. In short, it is certain, and we have hereupon the irrefragable testimony of Madame de Motteville, that when the Queen had succeeded in gaining over Condé, she caused Madame de Chevreuse to be informed "that she desired that such marriage should not take place, because it had been concerted for objects inimical to the royal interests. This command was the cause of all these propositions falling through and that they were no more spoken of."

But how did the Queen gain over Condé, and what part did Madame de Longueville play in the affair? That is certainly what neither De Retz could know, who was only aware of what passed in parliament, in the Palais d'Orleans, and the Hôtel de Chevreuse; nor the Duchess de Nemours and Madame de Motteville, who were not in the confidence of the Hôtel de Condé: they could only repeat hereupon what they had heard said in the Court circle, and they must be considered solely as the echoes of reports which it suited the Queen to spread. That is so probable that the one and the other, differing so widely as they did both in intention and feeling, tell exactly the same tale. Madame de Motteville states positively that Madame de Longueville, as soon as she returned from Stenay, advised Condé to break with the Chevreuses, and that La Rochefoucauld supported her in such design; and these are the motives which she attributes to her:—"Madame de Longueville, who had been long jealous of the beauty and graces of Mademoiselle de Chevreuse, could little bear to contemplate the probability of her being raised to a rank even more elevated than her own, and still less, that she should obtain the great influence

which such a person was likely to acquire over both her princely brothers. She had, therefore, exerted all her influence over Condé, and with him had been quite successful. But Conti was still in the height of his passion for the beautiful and fascinating girl who had been promised to him during his imprisonment; he supped every evening at the Hôtel de Chevreuse, and his affections, as well as his honour, were fully engaged." The Duchess de Nemours says the same thing in the same terms.

Confidant and adviser of Madame de Longueville and of Condé, La Rochefoucauld alone knew the whole truth, and could have told it to posterity; but it was not to tell the truth that his memoirs were penned, only too frequently to conceal it, to set in strong relief that which had been well done, and slur over that which had been badly done, or to cast the blame of it upon others. Attentive to the study of his part, and to never accept a bad one, La Rochefoucauld says truly that the Frondeurs, eagerly pressing forwards the marriage of the Prince de Conti with Mademoiselle de Chevreuse, and seeing it retarded, "suspected Madame de Longueville and the Duke de la Rochefoucauld of a design to break it off, for fear that the Prince de Conti should escape from their hands only to fall into those of Madame de Chevreuse and of the Coadjutor;" but he endeavours to give a reason for these suspicions, and to inform us whether they were well or ill founded. Instead of defending himself, and Madame de Longueville, he accuses Condé of having "adroitly increased the suspicions of the Frondeurs against his sister and La Rochefoucauld, firmly believing that so long as they held that belief, they would never discover the true cause of the postponement of the marriage." And what was that true cause? Here it is, according to La Rochefoucauld: it was

that the Prince de Condé "not having as yet either concluded or broken off his treaty with the Queen, and having been informed that the keeper of the seals—Châteauneuf—was about to be dismissed, wished to await that event to conclude the marriage, if Cardinal Mazarin were ruined by M. de Châteauneuf, or to break it off and make through that his court to the Queen, should M. de Châteauneuf be driven away by the Cardinal."

This interpretation of Condé's conduct does not do him great honour, but it is a very probable one. In the first place, if La Rochefoucauld knew how to glide so cleverly over all the ticklish points in which he could not appear to advantage, he did not, strictly speaking, tell lies; he retires rather than attacks, unless hurried away by passion, and he was never in a passion with Condé. And, further, the conduct which he attributes to Condé springs quite naturally out of the false position in which Condé had, by degrees, suffered himself to be placed.

Altogether, we are persuaded that Condé was then sincere. His sole error, and it is that which marked his entire conduct during the Fronde, was the not having had, either on this occasion or any other, a fixed and unalterable object. On the 13th of April the Queen took the seals from Madame de Chevreuse's friend, Châteauneuf, the representative of the Fronde in the Cabinet, to give them to the gravest person of his time, the first president, Mathieu Molé, a worthy servant of the State, very little friendly to the Fronde, and who then was sufficiently favourable towards the Prince de Condé. That same day she recalled to the Council as Secretary of State the Count de Chavigny, who had been formerly minister for Foreign Affairs under Richelieu. Formed in the school of the great Cardinal, as well as Mazarin, ousted from place,

crafty and resolute, feeling himself capable of bearing the weight of a ministry, Chavigny had beheld with a sufficiently ominous countenance, after the death of their common master, the sudden elevation of a colleague who had even begun by being his dependent. Since 1643, vanity had turned him aside from the high road of ambition, and he had entangled himself in the brakes of very complicated intrigues. In 1651, he passed as the friend of Condé. It was then only, if we can believe La Rochefoucauld, that Condé declared himself opposed to the marriage of his youthful brother with Mademoiselle de Chevreuse; and it was time that he opposed it, for that marriage was on the eve of accomplishment. Conti gave proof of the most ardent passion for Mademoiselle de Chevreuse; he paid her a thousand attentions which he hid from his friends, and particularly from his sister, for whom he ever professed to entertain an undivided adoration. He held long conferences with the Marquis de Laigues and other intimate friends of Mademoiselle de Chevreuse; it was even feared lest he should marry her without the necessary dispensations and without the participation of the head of his family. Condé, therefore, decided to act at once, and the reputation of the fair lady afforded him a means of attack which he employed with success upon his brother. He seems to have had no great difficulty in attaining his object. The Prince de Conti soon received proof that she was not by any means so immaculate as he had believed: her scarcely doubtful connection with the Coadjutor was placed in its true light, and, convinced that the object of his passion was unworthy the love of a man of honour, he began to look upon her with horror. "He even blamed Madame de Longueville and the Duke de la Rochefoucauld for not having warned him sooner of what

was said of her in society. From that moment means of of breaking off the affair without acrimony were sought; but the interests involved were too great, and the circumstances too piquant not to renew and augment still more the old hatred of Madame de Chevreuse and the Frondeurs against the Prince de Condé, and against those whom they suspected of taking part in that which had just been done.*

This testimony would justify Madame de Longueville and La Rochefoucauld himself for having urged Condé upon that disloyal and impolitic rupture, if one could believe it to be entirely sincere; but it is very difficult to admit that Madame de Longueville and her all-powerful adviser could have remained strangers to a determination so important, and there are many doubts and obscurities resting upon this deli-point. De Retz, whose introspect was so penetrating, and who does not pride himself on any great reserve in his judgments, knew not what opinion to form—Condé, Madame de Longueville, and La Rochefoucauld having afterwards assured him that they had had nothing to do with the rupture of the marriage.

But whose soever was the hand that broke off the projected alliance of the Condés with Madame de Chevreuse, it is beyond doubt that that had lost Condé and saved Mazarin. All the errors which followed were derived from that cardinal one. In it must be discerned the first link of that chain of disastrous events which ended by dragging Condé into civil war.

The resentment of Madame de Chevreuse may well be imagined, when she discovered that she had been tricked, that she had separated herself from Mazarin and the Queen, and had drawn Condé out of prison only to receive in ex-

* La Rochefoucauld, p. 69. Retz, tom. ii., p. 223.

change such an unpardonable outrage! Already, even a short time before, when the Queen ousted Châteauneuf without consulting the Duke d'Orleans, the wrath of the Frondeurs had been such, that at a council held at the Palais d'Orleans of the whole party, it was proposed to go, on the part of the lieutenant-general, and demand back the seals from Mathieu Molé. The most violent expedients were suggested, and some among the more hot-headed spoke of seizing their arms and descending into the streets. Condé, who had not yet entirely broken with the Frondeurs, and was present at this council with a few of his friends, threw cold water upon every proposal that was made, and energetically opposed the appeal to arms, declaring that he did not understand waging "a war of paving-stones and *pots de chambre*," and that he felt himself too much of a coward for such a campaign as that.

After some time passed in sharp discussion, the Duke retired into the apartments of his wife with De Retz, and there a brief consultation ensued, in which the Duchess d'Orleans, Madame de Chevreuse, and the Coadjutor endeavoured to persuade him to arrest the leaders of the opposite party, and rouse the people to insurrection. The Duke d'Orleans was in some degree moved; Condé, Conti, and the Duke de Beaufort and others, had retired into the library, and Mademoiselle de Chevreuse, springing towards the door, exclaimed, "Nothing is wanting but a turn of the key! It would be a fine thing indeed for a girl to arrest a winner of battles!"

The impetuosity of Mademoiselle de Chevreuse, however, alarmed the timid Duke d'Orleans. Had he been brought to it by degrees, he might have consented to the act; but her movement towards the door startled him, and he began

to whistle,—which, as De Retz observes, was never a good sign. Then declaring that he would consider of the matter till the next morning, he walked quietly into the library, and suffered the guests to depart in peace whom he had been so sorely tempted to make prisoners.

At the same time in the parliament all the violent measures taken against Mazarin were renewed: he was banished and rebanished, with confiscation of his possessions, and even his books and pictures were ordered to be sold. A decree had already been passed declaring all foreign cardinals incapable of serving in France, and of entering into the ministry. They did not stop there, and certain councillors who were not in the secrets of the party, and obeying only their passion, proposed to exclude from the ministry even the French cardinals as being still too dependent upon Rome. This sweeping motion was carried amid loud cheers, which resounded through all parts of the hall. Whereupon Condé laughingly remarked: "There's a fine echo." That same echo was the ruin of De Retz's hopes, who only so passionately desired to become a cardinal in order to succeed to Mazarin. Shortly afterwards the division between Condé and the Old Fronde was declared, and Condé applied himself to form an intermediate party, a new Fronde, which became sufficiently powerful to disquiet Madame de Chevreuse and the Coadjutor.* "Imagine," says the latter, "what the royal authority purged of Mazarinism would have been, and the party of the Prince de Condé purged of faction! More than all, what surety was there in M. the Duke d'Orleans!"

But De Retz was not the only politician who terrified himself with the idea of such a future looming thus darkly

* De Retz, tom. ii., p. 205. † The same, p. 214.

for France. Mazarin dreaded it as much as he. His authority was almost universally thought to be for ever annihilated; but a small number of courtiers who could read the Queen's heart, judged otherwise, and owed to the skilful line of conduct to which they adhered under these circumstances the high fortune to which they attained in the sequel.

There is little doubt that, in the first instance, Condé might have carried off the Regency from the Queen, deprived as she was of her prime minister, and by her own acknowledgment incapable of governing by herself; but then the direction of affairs belonged by right to the Duke d'Orleans, of whom Condé was jealous. Condé, however, preferred to keep the Regency in the Queen's hands, and by rendering himself formidable to the Government, forcing it to reckon with him. If that union of the Princes between themselves and the Fronde faction had subsisted, the re-establishment of the royal authority would have been impossible: and the commencement of the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, who, although he had only completed his thirteenth year, was about, by the force of an exceptional law, to be declared of age, would have offered the spectacle, so frequent in French annals,* of a state a prey to the divulsion of factions and the horrors of anarchy.

But for the happiness of France and the Queen-Regent, Condé was as unskilful in politics as he was great in war. He kept none of the promises he had made to the chiefs of the Fronde, the authors of his deliverance. The marriage of the Prince de Conti and Mademoiselle de Chevreuse, which had been the base of the treaty, and involved other engagements, was, as we have seen, remorselessly broken off.

* Retz—La Rochefoucauld—Joly.

The Queen Regent, in order to succeed in bringing back her favourite minister to power, had the tact to conceal his advances, and therefore chose in the first instance to replace him by Chavigny, who was his personal enemy. Then she negotiated with all parties, and skilfully opposed the Fronde to the Prince de Condé, the latter to the Duke d'Orleans, the parliament to the assembly of the nobles, the aversion to Mazarin to the fear which the Coadjutor inspired. Her ministers, whom she abused, had only the semblance of power; all that was real was possessed by Mazarin. From Bruhl, his place of exile, he governed France; the Queen adopted no resolution without its having been inspired by him, or met with his approval. Thus hidden by the Regent's mantle, the Cardinal followed with vigilant eye the quarrels of the Prince de Condé and the Frondeurs, fomenting them and inflaming them by every means at his disposal, prodigalising to Condé promises which must in the highest degree have alarmed the Fronde, and entangling him daily more and more in the meshes of intricate, tortuous negotiations, until he had seen the separation, for which he manœuvred, irremediably consummated. Then he stopped, and began insensibly even to fall back. The placing of Provence in the Prince de Conti's hands was deferred; and in fact it was held in reserve for the Duke de Mercœur, the eldest son of the Duke de Vendôme, who was seeking the hand of one of Mazarin's nieces; and it was also found inexpedient to deprive the Duke de Saint-Simon of Blaye to give it to La Rochefoucauld; and a thousand other difficulties of a like nature were raised, which both astonished and irritated Condé. Since he broke with the Fronde, it was apparently to unite himself with the Queen, and the higher his ambition soared, the more necessary it was to cover it with respect and

deference, in order to hasten and secure the treaty on foot, and to enchain the monarchy with his own fate. But the fiery Condé was incapable of such a line of conduct. Finding unexpected obstacles where previously he had met with facilities and hopeful anticipations, he lost his temper, and resumed the imperious tone which already, in 1649, had embroiled him with the Queen and Mazarin.

It appears also that Madame de Longueville shared in the soaring illusions of her brother, and that she bore but indifferently well her newly blown prosperity. Madame de Motteville gives us to understand so with her usual moderation, and the Duchess de Nemours rejoices to say so with all the acrimony and doubtless also the exaggeration of hatred.* It must, indeed, be owned, with the heroic instincts of Condé, Madame de Longueville shared also his haughty spirit. All her contemporaries ascribe to her an innate majesty which did not show itself on ordinary occasions; far from it, she was simple, amiable, adding thereto, when desirous of pleasing, a caressing and irresistible gentleness; but, with people whom she disliked, she intrenched herself in a frigid dignity, and Anne of Austria and she had never loved one another. A misplaced haughtiness towards the Queen is attributed to her. One day, says Madame de Nemours, she kept her waiting for two or three hours. It is very doubtful whether Madame de Longueville could have so far forgotten herself; but it is not impossible that she may have imagined, as well as her brother, that the fortunes of their house, having emerged more brilliant than ever from so rude a tempest, had no longer to dread the recurrence of further ill-omened shocks.

* Madame de Motteville, tom. iv., p. 346; Madame de Nemours, p. 106.

They deceived themselves: an immense peril was hanging over their heads.

Immediately that Madame de Chevreuse had seen that the Queen was growing colder towards Condé, and did not seem disposed to keep the promises that had been made him, her keen-sighted animosity instantly determined her course of action, and being for ever separated from Condé, she again drew towards the Queen with an offer of her services and those of her entire party against the common enemy. Mazarin, recognising the error he had committed in giving himself two enemies at the same time, and that at that moment the redoubtable individual, the man who at any cost must be destroyed, was Condé, very quickly forgot his grudges against Madame de Chevreuse, and advised the acceptance of her propositions. The Queen, it appears, was very averse to receive De Retz, or avail herself of his services; she detested him almost as much as she did Condé, well knowing that they were the two most dangerous enemies of him without whom she did not believe that she could really reign. Mazarin exhorted her himself to flatter De Retz's ambition, and, marvellously understanding each other at a distance—almost as well as when in each other's presence,—they composed and played out in the most perfect manner a comedy of which De Retz himself seems to have been the dupe, and of which Condé was very nearly being the victim.

Madame de Chevreuse has already been depicted both in good and evil, in her natural intelligence, quickness, keen introspection, and political genius, in her indomitable courage and audacity, and all that she was capable of undertaking in order to attain her objects. It will now be necessary to thoroughly understand De Retz's character, in order to perceive clearly the peril with which Condé was menaced.

By nature yet more restless than ambitious, a bad priest, impatient of his condition and having long struggled to emancipate himself from it, Paul de Gondi had prepared himself for cabals by composing or translating the life of a celebrated conspirator. Then, passing quickly from theory to practice, he had entered into one of the most sinister plots framed against Richelieu, and for his first experiment he had accepted the task, he, a young abbé, of assassinating the Cardinal at the altar during the ceremony of Mademoiselle de Montpensier's baptism. In 1643, he had not hesitated to throw himself into the arms of the *Importants;* but the title of Coadjutor of Paris, which had just been conferred upon him as a recompense for the virtues and services of his father, arrested him. The Fronde seemed created altogether expressly for him. He shared the parentage of it along with La Rochefoucauld. In vain in his Memoirs does he studiedly put forward general considerations: like La Rochefoucauld, he was only working for himself, and at least had the candour to own it. Compelled to remain in the Church, De Retz desired to rise in it as high as possible. He aspired to a cardinal's hat, and soon obtained it, thanks to his inscrutable manœuvring; but his supreme object was the post of prime minister, and to reach it, he played that double game which he so craftily concerted and so skilfully played out. Seeing that Mazarin and Condé were not heads of a government which would leave to others acting with them any great share of importance, he undertook to overthrow them, the one by the other, to carve out his way between them by them, and to raise upon their ruin the Duke d'Orleans, under whose name he would govern. To effect this he incessantly urged alike the Duke, the parliament, and the people, to demand, as the first condition of any reconciliation with the

Court, the dismissal of Mazarin, and at the same time he, under a mask, exhibited himself as a benevolent conciliator between royalty and the Fronde, promising the Queen, the indispensable sacrifice accomplished, to smooth all difficulties, and to bring over to her the Duke d'Orleans by separating him from Condé. Such was the real mainspring of all De Retz's movements—even those seemingly the most contrary: first the cardinalate, then the premiership under the auspices of the Duke d'Orleans, associated in some sort with royalty, without Mazarin or Condé. He was fain to hide his secret under the guise of the public weal, but that secret revealed itself by the very efforts he made to conceal it, and it did not escape the penetration of La Rochefoucauld, his accomplice at the outset of the Fronde, afterwards his adversary, who had a perfect knowledge of his character, and who had sketched it with a masterly hand, as De Retz also thoroughly comprehended and admirably depicted La Rochefoucauld. De Retz was indeed the evil genius of the Fronde. He always hindered it from progressing whether led by Mazarin or Condé, because he merely desired to have a weak government which he could dominate. To arrive at that end, he was capable of anything—tortuous intrigues, anonymous pamphlets, hypocritical sermons from the pulpit, studied orations in parliament, popular insurrections and desperate *coups de main*. Such was the man who, towards the end of May, 1651, was admitted, much against her will, into the secret councils of Anne of Austria.

Anything was to be tried, however, which might deliver her from the exactions of Condé. It was absolutely necessary that she should either grant his demands, or find some support to enable her to resist them. She accord-

ingly despatched Marshal du Plessis to speak with De Retz, at the archbishopric, towards one o'clock in the morning, at which hour he generally returned from his nocturnal visits to Mademoiselle de Chevreuse. De Retz was willing to seize the opportunity of avenging himself upon Condé, and probably judged he might do so without bringing about the return of Mazarin. He accepted, then, at once the Queen's invitation, and flung the letter of safe-conduct which she had sent him into the fire, in order to show his confidence in her promises. The following night, at twelve o'clock, he was brought into the Queen's Oratory by a back staircase, and a long conversation ensued between them. Anne of Austria was very caressing in her manner towards the Coadjutor, and sought, after winning her way to his confidence, to embroil him with Châteauneuf, by informing him that it was that friend of Madame de Chevreuse who was the most opposed to his cardinalate, because he wanted the hat for himself. It must be remembered that France at that moment had the appointment of a cardinal at its disposition, and it had been long promised to the Prince de Conti. Anne of Austria now offered it to De Retz who, in reply, at the end of a long harangue, during which the Queen interrupted him impatiently more than once, assured her that he had not come there to receive favours, but to merit them.

"What will you do for me, then?" asked the Queen. "What will you do?"

"Madam," replied he, "I will oblige the Prince de Condé to quit Paris ere eight days are over, and will carry off the Duke d'Orleans from him before to-morrow night."

The Queen, transported with joy, extended her hand to him saying—"Give me your hand on that, and the day after

to-morrow you are a cardinal, and moreover the second amongst my friends."

A few days afterwards, De Retz and Madame de Chevreuse had raised the entire Fronde against the Prince de Condé. The worthy archbishop had announced his approach to the enemy he was about to attack by a cloud of the same kind of libels, satires, and epigrams, which he had always found so efficacious in prejudicing the people of Paris against any one whom he thought fit to hold forth to popular odium. At the same time a multitude of criers and hawkers were sent through the town, spreading, at the very lowest price, all the sarcasms which had been composed at the archbishopric in the morning, to render the conduct of Condé ridiculous, contemptible, and hateful in the eyes of the multitude.

At length, when the Coadjutor believed that everything had been sufficiently prepared, he made the Palatine write to inform the Queen that he was about to go to the parliament. Mademoiselle de Chevreuse was with the Regent at the time she received this intimation; and the delight which it occasioned was so great that the virtuous and pious Anne of Austria caught the archbishop's mistress in her arms, and kissed her more than once, exclaiming, with no very great regard for decorum, "You rogue! you are now doing me as much good as you have hitherto done me harm."

De Retz kept his word, and went to the parliament, but the progress against Condé was so slow that Mazarin, the Queen, and De Retz, began to revolve more summary measures, and, towards the latter part of June, their deliberations ended in a sinister project of again arresting or of assassinating Condé.

This obscure affair, as yet only partially unveiled, and

which probably will never be so entirely, is not so dark and impenetrable, however, as to prevent us from seeing, within the shadow thereof, fearful and criminal purposes, to which even the more open vices of the age are comparatively light. We are told by De Retz that the Marshal de Hocquincourt, with more frankness than the rest, proposed in direct terms to assassinate Condé. The Coadjutor himself, however, Madame de Chevreuse, and other leaders of the Fronde, but above all Senneterre, who had about this time obtained a great share of the Queen's confidence, opposed not only the bold crime proposed at first by Hocquincourt, but also all the schemes which he and others afterwards suggested, and which, though apparently more mild, were all likely to end in the same event.

Rumours of what was meditated soon reached the Prince's ears, who then saw clearly the nature of his position. He perceived that he had quarrelled thoroughly and for ever with the Frondeurs and with the Queen, and that henceforth he was placed between imprisonment and assassination. He felt certain that this time, should he fall into the hands of his enemies, he would be treated far more harshly than in 1650, and that probably he might never see the light again. He despised death, but the idea of perpetual incarceration was insupportable to him, and that idea fastening itself by degrees on his mind caused projects to enter into it which until then had only momentarily crossed it.

Too high-minded to quit Paris as though he were terrified, Condé exhibited no change in his conduct; merely confining himself to no longer visiting the Palais-Royal or the Palais d'Orléans, and never going abroad without a numerous escort of officers and retainers. Already for some time past foreseeing the storm that was gathering against him, he had

taken serious measures to confront it: he had strengthened all the fortresses that were in his hands. He had despatched to Flanders the Marquis de Sillery, La Rochefoucauld's brother-in-law, under pretext of finally disengaging Madame de Longueville and Turenne from the treaties they had made with the Spaniards in 1650, with secret instructions to renew them, and to ascertain how far he might reckon on the assistance of Spain if he were compelled to draw the sword. The Count de Fuensaldagne did not fail, agreeable to the policy of his court, to promise much more than was asked of him, and he omitted nothing calculated to stir up Condé to have recourse to arms.

Chance had a share in urging Condé to take a further and almost decisive step in the dangerous path that was opening before him. One evening, just as he had lain down on his bed and was chatting with Vineuil, one of his trusty friends, the latter received a note which directed him to warn the Prince that two companies of guards were advancing on the side of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. It was thought that those troops were about to invest the hôtel. Condé jumped out of bed, dressed himself, mounted his horse instantly, and, accompanied by a few attendants, took his way through the faubourg Saint-Michel. On gaining the high road, he heard the clatter of a somewhat strong body of horsemen approaching, and thinking that it was the squadron in search of him, he fell back at first in the direction of Meudon; then, instead of re-entering Paris, when day broke he sought an asylum in his château of Saint-Maur. He reached it on the morning of the 6th of July; and it may readily be guessed what the effect, in Paris and throughout the kingdom, of such a retreat was, and for such motives. The Princess de Condé; the Prince de Conti, Madame de

Longueville, La Rochefoucauld, the Duke de Nemours, the Duke de Richelieu, the Prince's most intimate friends, and more than one illustrious personage, such as the Duke de Bouillon and Turenne, repaired immediately to Saint-Maur. In a day or two, Condé saw himself surrounded by a court as brilliant and as numerous as that of the King, and there he kept up a right royal festivity. After a while he sent a considerable number of officers disguised into Paris, who bestirred themselves in every quarter in his favour; and when he considered himself in a position to hold his own against both the Queen and the Frondeurs together, he quitted Saint-Maur and returned to his hôtel near the Palais d'Orléans, desiring to put a good complexion on the aspect of his affairs and to impose upon his enemies by that bold and high-minded conduct.* He appeared again also in the parliament, now once more become the battle-field of parties. De Retz, full of his own individual hatred, augmented by that of Madame de Chevreuse, seconded at once by the friends of the Duke d'Orleans and by those of the Queen, burning to tear from the Court and win, by serving it, the cardinal's hat, the object of his ardent desires, the necessary stepping-stone to his ambition, brought all his courage and vanity towards enacting the part of the Prince's enemy. And there, during the months of July and August, in that pretended sanctuary of law and justice, passed all those deplorable scenes which De Retz and La Rochefoucauld have related, and in which Mazarin, from his retreat on the banks of the Rhine, rejoiced to see his two enemies waste their strength, and work unwittingly but surely their common ruin and his approaching triumph.

A crisis was clearly inevitable. Condé could no longer

* La Rochefoucauld, p. 83.

perceive any sign of a pacific issue from the position in which he had been placed, or rather in which he had placed himself, and at his right hand stood Madame de Longueville and the Prince de Conti, who held no opinions contrary to those of his sister, urging him to cut the knot which he knew not how to untie. La Rochefoucauld stopped him for a moment on the threshold of war, entreating Condé to allow him to undertake fresh negotiations. The Prince consented willingly thereto. Madame de Longueville was opposed to it. La Rochefoucauld, speaking to her with that authority which his long devotion gave him, represented to her the terrible responsibility which she took upon herself both towards Condé and the State, and he obtained from her a promise that she would withdraw for a time from the arena of strife, and accompany her sister-in-law, the Princess de Condé, to Berri, and allow him to remain in Paris by the side of Condé in order to make a last essay towards conjuring the tempest.

The fitting moment has now arrived to examine the conduct of Madame de Longueville in these grave conjunctures, the different feelings which animated her, and the true and lamentable motive which determined her thus to hurry her brother into civil war, and herself with him.

Let us remember:—Anne de Bourbon exhibited extraordinary contrasts in her character, entirely opposite qualities which, developing themselves in turn according to circumstances, gave a particular impress to different periods of her life. She derived from nature and the Christian education she had received a delicate and susceptible conscience, a humility in her own eyes and before God that would have made her an accomplished Carmelite; and at the same time she was born with that ardour of soul which is termed am-

bition, the instinct of glory and of grandeur. This instinct, which was also that of her house and her age, soon obtained the mastery on emerging from her pious adolescence, and when she despaired of overcoming her father's resistance to the serious desire she had manifested of burying herself, at fifteen, in the convent of the Rue St. Jacques, with her already formidable beauty and the nascent desire to shine and to please. That desire was at once Madame de Longueville's strength and weakness, the principle of her coquetry amid the amusements of peace, as of her intrepidity in the midst of war and danger. Once condemned to live in the world, she transferred the dreams of glory which she dared not realise for herself, to gild her brother's wreath of laurel,—that Louis de Bourbon, almost of the same age as herself, the cherished companion of her infancy, so witty, so generous, so bold, that he was at once a friend and a master, and the idol of her heart, before another object had usurped the place or after he had abandoned it. In the first and the last portion of her life, which are incomparably the best, she referred everything to Condé, and Condé had a confidence in her altogether boundless. The suspicious and penetrating Mazarin had very early formed that opinion of her, and in the *carnets*, to which he has confided his very inmost feelings, he depicts her with the pen of an enemy, but of an enemy who knew her well. "Madame de Longueville," says he, "has entire power over her brother. She desires to see Condé dominate and dispose of all favours. If she is prone to gallantry, it is by no means that she thinks of doing wrong, but in order to make friends and servitors for her brother. She insinuates ambitious ideas into his mind to which he is already only too much inclined." If, in 1648, she became violently enraged against her brother, it was

that, fascinated and misled by La Rochefoucauld, she thought that Condé, by serving the Court and Mazarin, was false to his own fame. In 1649, she had only too far contributed to make him enter by degrees upon that fatal path into which La Rochefoucauld had lured herself. Here, pride nourished the hope of one day seeing the Condés replace the D'Orleans. When, in 1850, a son was born to Gaston, the little Duke de Valois, who did not live, she fretted at an event which threatened to strengthen and perpetuate a house for which she had no affection, and in a letter which has remained inedited up to the present day, she allows the thoughts that had insinuated themselves into her heart to appear. "I think," she writes to Lenet on the 22nd August, 1650, "that the news of the birth of M. d'Orleans' son will no more rejoice my sister-in-law than it has delighted me. It is to my nephew that we must offer our condolence." In 1651, that ambition was carried to its highest pitch. Madame de Longueville experienced the natural intoxication that the power and prosperity of her house was calculated to give her; and when we think of what perils she had just surmounted, by what homage she was surrounded on all sides, that she was then thirty-two, that she was in all the splendour of her beauty, and also under all the strength of her passions, we might well be disposed to pardon her that fugitive intoxication, if it had not likewise drawn down disastrous consequences upon herself, upon Condé, and upon her country.

And here again occurs the question we have just raised. Was it Madame de Longueville who caused the rupture of the projected marriage between the Prince de Conti and Mademoiselle de Chevreuse? If hers was the chief fault, we look upon it with regret, that in the eye of posterity she

should bear the blame of such a fault. If she only yielded to the advice of La Rochefoucauld, we have the more excuse for her, and assert that the fault comes home to him. As we have seen, that affair is still involved in much obscurity, and since De Retz himself hesitates, we ought to feel well justified to hesitate in our turn. But it must be confessed, the suspicions of the Frondeurs and the accusations of the Queen's friends have such great weight that it is scarcely possible to avoid attributing to Madame de Longueville a sufficiently large share in the deplorable rupture whence so many evils sprang. Her complaisant biographer, Villefore, is on this point in accordance with Madame de Motteville. Without doubt the marriage of the Prince de Conti with Mademoiselle de Chevreuse was far from meeting with universal approval. The prudes of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, and Mademoiselle de Scuderi in particular, protested strongly against such an alliance. The old outrage was remembered which, in 1643, Madame de Montbazon, aided by Madame de Chevreuse, had dared to perpetrate upon Madame de Longueville; the audacious manners of the mother also, which seemed to have been inherited by the daughter; the equivocal reputation of the latter, the suspected and almost public *liaison* which she carried on with De Retz. Vain objections!—which Madame de Longueville could not allege, for she perfectly well knew all that when at Stenay she had authorised the Palatine to pledge her word for hers. Other reasons for her conduct must therefore be sought, and the reasons can only be those which her enemies have given, and in the foremost place the jealousy of influence, the desire of retaining over her younger brother, the Prince de Conti, an empire that Charlotte de Lorraine would, infallibly, have deprived her.

That irreparable error, in bringing about the perilous position in which Condé speedily found himself, necessarily led Madame de Longueville to the commission of another error, in some sort compulsory, and which was the complement of the first; it is certain that more than anyone else she incited her brother to take the resolution he ultimately determined upon adopting. La Rochefoucauld says so, and all contemporary writers repeat the same. We will merely make this essential remark: Madame de Longueville had at first very readily entered into the reconciliatory plans of Condé and La Rochefoucauld, and into their negotiations with the Court; it was only when those designs had failed, when towards the month of June negotiation had given place to violence, when she saw her brother surrounded by assassins, liable at any moment to fall under the blows of Hocquincourt, or to be flung again into the dungeons of Vincennes, it was then that trembling with fear and indignation, and ill as she was in health, she rushed to Saint-Maur; and that, finding there the flower of the aristocracy and the army assembled, she felt her warlike ardour of 1649 and 1650 rekindle. She thought that nothing could resist on the field of battle the victor of Rocroy and Lens, seconded by Turenne, who at Stenay had shown such a lively and tender attachment for her, and the sentiment of which she had never ceased to treat with all the exquisite tact of which she was capable. She had also great confidence in Spain, which was at her feet, and lavished upon her every kind of deference. She urged, therefore, Condé to fling further perfidious and useless negotiations to the winds, and to appeal to the fortune of arms.

But to these different motives, the force of which Madame de Longueville summed up the value with the authority of

her intelligence and experience, was joined another still more potent over her heart, and which had been the original mainspring of her resolutions and conduct. La Rochefoucauld alone has no right to impute it to her as a crime. For ourselves, we do not hesitate to make it known upon the evidence of irrefragable testimony; for we are not composing a panegyric of Madame de Longueville, but narrating certain passages of her life, in which that of the seventeenth century, with its grandeurs and its miseries, is so completely identified; and if we feel a sincere admiration for the sister of the great Condé, that admiration does not close our eyes to her errors. It is not unseemly to admire a heroine whose lofty qualities are mingled with weaknesses which remind us of her sex. It is, moreover, the first duty of history, such as we understand it, and desire to have it understood, not to stop at the surface of events, but to seek for their causes in the depths of the soul, in human passions and their inevitable consequences.

As has been already said, Madame de Longueville did not love her husband. Not only was he greatly her senior, but there was nothing about him that responded to the ideal which that illustrious disciple of the Hôtel de Rambouillet had formed for herself, and which she pursued in vain through guilty illusions, until that which she sought and found at its very source—no longer in the school of Corneille and of Mademoiselle de Scuderi, but in that of her Saviour, in the Carmelite convent and at Port Royal. Never was woman less prone to gallantry by nature than Anne de Bourbon; but, as we have just remarked, her heart and her imagination created in her the necessity of pleasing and of being beloved; and it was that want, early cultivated by poetry, romances, and the theatre, and somewhat later cor-

rupted by the example of the society in which she lived, which lured her far from the domestic hearth, and hurried her into the brilliant and adventurous career amidst which we find her in 1651. Then her greatest fear was to fall again into her husband's hands. M. de Longueville had very willingly followed his wife in the Fronde; his own discontentments of themselves drove him into it, as well as his uncertain and mobile character which led him to embark in novel enterprises with as much facility as it urged him to abandon them. In 1649 he had figured as one of the generals of Paris, and had raised Normandy against Mazarin. One year of imprisonment had cooled him, and in 1651, having recovered his government of Normandy and tasted some few months of that peaceful grandeur, he found it so much to his liking as to be not readily tempted to re-embark upon a stormy course of life at the age of nearly fifty-seven. Reports, only too true, had informed him of what until then he had only surmised imperfectly—the declared *liaison* of his wife with La Rochefoucauld. He had been greatly irritated at it, and Condé's enemies, with De Retz at their head, carefully fostered his ill humour, and his daughter, Marie d'Orléans, afterwards Duchess de Nemours, seconded them to the utmost of her power.

She detested her stepmother, whose faults her strong common-sense led her easily to scan, without her own vulgar and commonplace mind being capable of comprehending the Duchess's great qualities. It was impossible less to resemble each other. The one adored grandeur even to the romantic and the chimerical, the other was entirely positive and matter-of-fact, and absorbed with her own interest, especially in those relating to her property. Alienated from the Fronde through the jealous hatred she bore towards her

stepmother, who in turn liked her almost as little, and probably also did not take pains enough to manage her, Mademoiselle turned towards the Queen, and strove to gain over her father to the same party. Therein she succeeded by degrees. The Duke de Longueville could not overtly separate himself from Condé, and at first promised him all he required; then he shut himself up in Normandy, and there followed a dubious line of conduct which neither compromised him with the Court party nor that of Condé. But he recalled his wife peremptorily, and sent her a mandate to rejoin him. That mandate was pressing and threatening, and it terrified Madame de Longueville. She knew that her husband had been informed of everything, and that he was wholly given up to the influence of his daughter. She feared ill-treatment; she felt certain at least that once in Normandy she would no more quit it, and that her time would be passed between an aged, irritated husband, and an overruling step-daughter, who would apply themselves in concert to retain her in the solitude of a province, and perhaps to make her expiate in confinement her bygone triumphs. The idea of the sorrowful life which awaited her in Normandy produced very nearly the same effect upon her as the thought of a second imprisonment upon the mind of Condé. She sought for a means of avoiding that which was to her the worst of all evils; there was an assured though dangerous one—war, which would prevent her from repairing to Normandy, under the pretext more or less specious that she could not abandon her brother. Such was the design she formed within herself and very soon resolved upon adopting, and the fresh negotiations which La Rochefoucauld proposed thwarted her doubly. Should those negotiations prove successful they would deprive her of the only pretext she had

for not rejoining her husband in Normandy, and she thought it strange that it was La Rochefoucauld who would expose her to that peril. From that moment doubtless angry explanations took place between them. She perceived that La Rochefoucauld was wearied of his sacrifices, that he wished to reconcile himself with the Court, repair his fortunes, and taste the sweets of peace; whilst in the eyes of the superb princess the paramount consideration with him, for whom she had done so much, ought to have been never to forsake her, should they both together rush to certain ruin. But La Rochefoucauld was no longer wound up to a tone so lofty, worthy of the Great Cyrus and of their chivalrous love of 1648, and the haughty Madame* was deeply wounded at the discovery. Nevertheless, she was not insensible to what there was of reasonable in La Rochefoucauld's advice, and not to incur the entire responsibility of the part which her brother might take, she consented to follow her sister-in-law, the Princess de Condé, and her nephew, the Duke d'Enghien, into Berri, one of Condé's governments:—a journey which moreover had the advantage of separating her from her husband. She set out, therefore, on the 18th of July for Bourges, taking with her the elder of her two sons, the younger, Charles de Paris, born in 1649, not being able to bear the fatigue of the journey. M. de Longueville recalled her from Berri as he had from the capital, and he insisted on the return of his son in terms so forcible that she was compelled to comply, so far as the boy was concerned. Thenceforward, being alone and exposing only herself, without breaking with M. de Longueville, and by using all her wit to colour her disobedience, she eluded his orders, remained in Berri, forming in the

* The name she figures under in the *Grand Cyrus*.

depth of her heart the most ardent desire for war, but calm in appearance; sometimes accompanying the Princess de Condé to Montrond, at others making somewhat lengthened visits to the Carmelite convent at Bourges. And thus she awaited the issue of the negotiations, counselled and carried on by La Rochefoucauld, which should decide her destiny.

La Rochefoucauld must indeed have very earnestly longed to bring to a close the life of fatigue and danger which he had for three years led, to have been able to cherish any illusion as to the success of the steps he was about again to take. Where was the hope of regaining the Fronde which had just been outrageously deceived, after it had given itself to the Prince de Condé in his misfortune, and had extricated him from it? If La Rochefoucauld thought that the alliance of the Fronde was necessary, he ought to have set about it sooner and at the proper time, persuaded Condé and his sister to keep their word, and sealed the alliance agreed upon between the Prince de Conti and Mademoiselle de Chevreuse. He had not done so; and now that he had allowed a treacherous war to spring up between Condé and the Fronde, by what charm did he think he could suspend it? With the Queen also all negotiation was exhausted and superfluous. An understanding should have been come to with her when she was so disposed, when Condé was all-powerful, when he could either have more readily abased or exalted the Crown: *Tum decuit cum sceptra dabas.* But at the end of August, Condé, embroiled with the Court and with the Fronde, had nothing left save his sword. That was sufficient, doubtless, to make everybody tremble, but was it enough to inspire confidence in anyone? La Rochefoucauld obtained, therefore, on all sides to his advances only very vague responses. The time for negotiation was passed

irrevocably, and whilst La Rochefoucauld exhausted himself in useless efforts, the Queen and the Fronde concluded a treaty together, with the common design of overwhelming Condé.

This treaty was the work of Mazarin, the masterpiece of his political skill. It authorised the Frondeurs to speak against the Cardinal in parliament for some time forward in order to cover their secret understanding. The hat was assured to the Coadjutor, high posts and great advantages to the principal friends of Madame de Chevreuse, the first rank in the cabinet given to Châteauneuf, and a solid peace established between Mazarin and the powerful Duchess, under the condition that his nephew Mancini, provided for with the duchy of Nevers or that of Rethelois, should marry Mademoiselle de Chevreuse. The draft of this projected treaty fell into the hands of Condé through the bearer of the paquet in which it was enclosed being in the service of the Marquis de Noirmoutier, and the Prince caused it to be printed in order to ventilate and bring to light the alliance between the Frondeurs, the Queen, and Mazarin. Madame de Motteville, so well informed of everything relating to the Queen and the Cardinal, considers that treaty as perfectly authentic, and she gives the different articles of it, "as the best means for understanding the changes which were made by the Queen immediately after the King's majority."

That majority had been declared on the 7th of September in a *Bed of Justice*, with all the customary pomp. As the first Prince of the blood did not think it possible to be present at it in safety, during that evening the Queen in her indignation had whispered these significant words to De Retz: "Either M. le Prince or I must perish." *

* Retz, tom. ii. p. 291.

CHAPTER V.

CONDÉ, URGED BY HIS SISTER, GOES UNWILLINGLY INTO REBELLION.

ANNE OF AUSTRIA now seriously prepared to make head against Condé, and with that intent she rallied round her all the forces of the Fronde united with those of the royal army. In fine, with the firm design of inspiring the Fronde with perfect confidence, at the same time that the nomination of France to the Cardinalate had devolved upon the Coadjutor, the Queen again brought into the cabinet, as a sort of Prime Minister, the statesman of the party, the friend and instrument of Madame de Chevreuse, the aged but ambitious Châteauneuf, with the two-fold engagement to serve Mazarin in secret and to contribute to the utmost of his power to destroy Condé. In such arrangements, let it be thoroughly understood, no one was acting with good faith: De Retz and Châteauneuf in nowise proposed to re-establish Mazarin; Châteauneuf did not dream of making another man's bed, but, once having attained power, he intended to keep it for himself, and Mazarin was firmly resolved to dismiss Châteauneuf as soon as he could. But if these crafty politicians were ready to betray one another in everything else, there was one point on which they were sincerely united—the destruction of Condé. At that they laboured in concert, or rather vied with each other. Queen Anne manifested therein a fervour, a constancy, a marvellous skill, and succeeded in

carrying off from Condé the chief supports of his great strength. He saw that war was inevitable, and yet, says Sismondi, he only yielded to it with repugnance. "You will have it so," said Condé at last; "but understand that if I do draw the sword, I shall be the last to return it to the scabbard." It was the women especially who hurried their admirers into the *mêlée*.

Considering the nomination of the New Cabinet, with Châteauneuf at its head, as a veritable declaration of war, Condé went to Chantilly, and, it is said, had a very narrow escape from falling into an ambuscade which the Court had prepared for him at Pontoise.

He remained for some few days at Chantilly, pensive and agitated in presence of the great resolution he was on the eve of taking. The mediation of the Duke d'Orleans, the only one he could accept, offered no security, the Duke instead of governing the Coadjutor and Madame de Chevreuse, was then governed by them. His individual inclination was to come to an understanding with the Queen and even with Mazarin, as he had very clearly shown. He had continually returned to it; but after so many lying words and odious plots, the execution of which alone was wanting, he thought he would be in a better position to treat solidly with the Court at the head of a powerful and victorious army, than in the midst of wretched intrigues, unworthy of his character, in which he momentarily staked his honour and his life. He never permitted the idea of raising himself above royalty to enter into his mind; he merely thought that to obtain better conditions from it it was necessary to render himself imposing to it, and to make himself feared. That is what was then passing in his mind. Civil war inspired him with horror, and we may learn from La Roche-

foucauld,* who was then in his most intimate confidence, that he long weighed "the consequences of so grave a determination." Let us be chary, therefore, of accusing Condé of levity; let us recognise that insensibly his position had become such that he could neither remain in it nor quit it, in one way or another, save with equal danger.

Among the different motives which rendered Condé averse to civil war, the passion that he had just begun to feel for the Duchess de Châtillon must not be forgotten. We shall return a little further on to this episode in Condé's life. It is sufficient to remark here that it was grievous to him to quit the lovely Duchess, who then was residing very close to Chantilly, in the charming château of Merlon or Mello, near Pontoise, the enjoyment of which had been granted to her for life by the old Princess de Condé, Charlotte Marguerite de Montmorency, who expired in her arms at Châtillon-sur-Loing, in December, 1650—a gracious grant, which the Prince, her son, had hastened to ratify with a somewhat interested generosity. Madame de Châtillon had her reasons of more than one kind for being opposed to the war, and in the intimate counsels of the Prince she urged him to an understanding with the Court. In that she made common cause with La Rochefoucauld, and was in open quarrel with Madame de Longueville. Sensible of Condé's passion without sharing it, she managed that lofty lover with infinite tact, at the same time that she was deeply enamoured of the young, handsome, and brave Duke Charles Amadeus of Savoy, Nemours,† who from his

* La Rochefoucauld, p. 76.

† Charles Amadeus had succeeded to the title and rank of his elder brother, the Duke de Nemours, one of Condé's intimate friends in youth, who had been killed early in action, even before Rocroy. Condé had transferred to Charles Amadeus the affection which he bore his brother. The

youth and adventurous instincts would have longed for war, and whom she alone, seconded by La Rochefoucauld, retained in the party of peace.

Everything, however, tended to precipitate Condé towards the fatal resolution. Prudence did not permit him to remain any longer at Chantilly,* and it behoved him to place himself beyond the risk of a *coup-de-main* by withdrawing to his government of Berri, whither he had already sent his son, his wife, and his sister. It was, it is true, the road to Guienne, but he might stop there. All the population was devoted to him, and the tower of Bourges and the strong fortalice of Montrond offered him a safe asylum.

Condé, even after reaching Berri, still hesitated, not wishing to take any step before again conferring with his sister, who was then at Montrond with the Princess. There he held a final council, a supreme deliberation, at which Madame de Longueville, Conti, and La Rochefoucauld were present. More than one grave motive urged him to war: the well-founded dread of assassination or of a fresh incarceration, the ardent hatred of his enemies, of the Queen and the Fronde, the power of Châteauneuf which certainly had not been given him in vain, the inutility of negotiations with people who seemed decidedly to have taken their choice, the necessity of avoiding the fate of Henri de Guise, the consciousness of his strength so soon as his foot should

young duke had married the beautiful Madlle. de Vendôme, daughter of Duke Cæsar, and sister of the Dukes de Mercœur and Beaufort, and by her he had two daughters who became, one the Queen of Portugal, the other the Duchess of Savoy. At the death of the Duke de Nemours, in 1652, his title passed to his younger brother Henri de Nemours, Archbishop of Rheims, who then quitted the church, and espoused Madlle. de Longueville, the authoress of the Memoirs.

* La Rochefoucauld, p. 96.

tread the field of battle, the promises seemingly so sure of the Bouillons and many others. At the same time, his good sense, his loyalty, the scarcely stifled instincts of duty, and his innate aversion for anything which resembled anarchy, restrained him; and in that prolonged and dubious struggle between conflicting feelings, there were others which hurried him onward. Madame de Longueville, the Prince de Conti, La Rochefoucauld also urged him to declare himself against the Court, and Madame de Longueville with more vivacity than anyone else.* Condé still resisted, explaining to them all the strength of royalty, the ascendancy of the King's name, the weakness and treachery of factions, the bad faith of Spain. Then concluding by yielding, he addressed them in these memorable words: "You commit me to a strange line of action, of which you will tire sooner than I, and in which you will abandon me." He spoke truly as regarded Conti, and perhaps also La Rochefoucauld; but it remains to be seen whether Madame de Longueville, after having helped to drive her heroic brother into civil war, did not follow him with an inviolable constancy, whether she did not share, even to extremity, the dangers and adversities of the Prince, and whether, during his long exile, she re-appeared for a single moment at Court or in those *salons* of the Louvre and the Palais Royal, which had witnessed her early successes, and in which her wit and beauty still promised her fresh triumphs.

* Mad. de Motteville.

CHAPTER VI.

MADAME DE LONGUEVILLE COQUETS WITH THE DUKE DE NEMOURS.

His determination to unsheath the sword once taken, Condé put his plans into execution without throwing one glance behind him. Having collected together in Berri his family and chief supporters, he distributed amongst them the several parts they had to play in their common enterprise. After this, accompanied by La Rochefoucauld, he went to take possession of his new government of Guienne, and there raise the standard of insurrection, leaving in Berri his wife and son, his sister, the Prince de Conti, the Duke de Nemours, with the President Violé and others whom he nominated to important functions. He had placed his brother at the head of affairs there, and given the military command to the Duke de Nemours. But the result of these arrangements was disappointing to him. The Duke de Nemours undoubtedly possessed the most brilliant courage, but he had neither the talents nor the steadiness of a general. Still absorbed with his passion for Madame de Châtillon, who, as has been said, had long retained him in the party of peace, he found in Berri a counter-attraction in Madame de Longueville who drew him towards that of war; and it would seem that he occupied himself more with paying court to the lovely lady than of raising and arming soldiers and making Berri a focus of resistance, both political and

military; for very speedily the Prince de Conti and he were reduced to defend themselves in Bourges instead of being able to operate in the open and make any advance. The new Minister Châteauneuf showed himself worthy of the confidence of Madame de Chevreuse and the Fronde. He made the Queen understand that it was necessary to combat the revolt foot to foot from its very first step, and he persuaded her to march herself with the young King into Berri at the head of a strong army. He nobly inaugurated the new ministry by that measure, which had two objects: the one direct and immediate, to strangle the insurrection at its birth; the other still more important, to set royalty at liberty far from Duke Gaston and the Parliament. The city of Bourges, which had shown so much enthusiasm on Condé's arrival, opened its gates to the King and Châteauneuf. The strong tower which defended the city, offering no resistance, was taken without a blow being struck, and instantly demolished. The Princess de Condé, her son, Madame de Longueville, Conti, and Nemours were forced to take refuge hastily in the citadel of Montrond. On learning that Palluan was advancing on that fortress, Conti and Nemours not wishing that the precious pledges confided to their charge should incur any risk, left the Marquis de Persan in Montrond, and with what remained to them of their faithful troops escorted the Princess, her son, and Madame de Longueville as far as Guienne, which they reached by the end of the month of October.

It was during that rapid journey and their very brief sojourn in Berri that certain obscure relations, it would appear, were formed between the Duke de Nemours and Madame de Longueville, the report of which reaching Bordeaux, exaggerated probably by interested and malevo-

lent underlings, wounded La Rochefoucauld and drove him to a violent rupture. A loyal and confiding explanation might have sufficed to disperse a cloud, such as at times will obscure the most settled friendships. La Rochefoucauld brewed a storm out of it which, thanks to his Memoirs, has sent its echoes down to posterity. His separation from Madame de Longueville was marked by an eagerness which excites the suspicion that he had longed for it.* He ought at least to have stopped there, but hurried away by an implacable resentment, he accused her, or caused her to be accused by Condé, of having wished to betray his interests to serve those of the Duke de Nemours, giving her even to understand that "if a like prepossession took her for another, she was capable of going to the same extremities if that person desired it."† The accusation is yet more absurd than odious. The Duke de Nemours was not the least in the world a party chief; he was a friend of Condé, whose fidelity could only be shaken through his love for Madame de Châtillon. To detach him from Madame de Châtillon was therefore to give him wholly to Condé. Moreover, Madame de Châtillon, like La Rochefoucauld, was for peace, she had won over the Duke de Nemours to it, and both together urged Condé thereto. To carry off the Duke de Nemours from such conspiracy and to seduce him to the war party, was to serve the interests of Condé like as his sister intended. Thus the principal and the dominant motive of Madame de Longueville's conduct was just the opposite of that which La Rochefoucauld imputed to her. Let us add further that she had always had a rivalry of beauty with

* "La Rochefoucauld, depuis assez longtemps ayant envie de la quitter, prit cette occasion avec joie."—Mad. de Nemours, p. 150.

† La Rochefoucauld, edition 1662, p. 198.

Madame de Châtillon, and that her vanity was not sorry to humiliate a rival whom she did not tolerate by depriving her for a few days of a lover of whose attachment the latter fancied herself perfectly secure. Love and the senses had nothing to do with it in this matter. The gratification of the senses, it has already been remarked, did not ensnare her; she was proof against their surprises. Previously the Duke de Nemours had addressed his ardent homage to her, but all the attractions of his handsome person and his lofty bearing had made no impression upon her, and she only bestowed a thought on the amiable Duke when she had some interest to forward by reviving such conquest. And this is not an opinion hazarded at a venture; it is furnished us by a person thoroughly well informed, and who had no affection for Madame de Longueville; the testimony therefore is the more valuable: "M. de Nemours* previously had not much pleased her, and notwithstanding the attachment he appeared to entertain for her, as well as all the good qualities and grand airs of which he could boast, she had found nothing charming about him save the pleasure he showed himself desirous of giving her by abandoning Madame de Châtillon for herself, and that which she had of depriving a woman whom she did not like of a friend of so much consequence." Now how far had this *liaison* of a few days gone? Bussy is the only contemporary who offers any reply to this question in the cynical light of his *Histoire amoreuse des Gaules.* But who would accept that satire literally? It proves only one thing, the unfortunate notoriety which the imprudence of Madame de Longueville derived from the Memoirs of La Rochefoucauld published

* Mad. de Nemours, pp. 149, 150.

in 1662. Before those Memoirs saw the light, not a word is anywhere to be found on a point as obscure as it is delicate. After, Bussy was delighted to repeat La Rochefoucauld, and Madame de Longueville has thus fallen into the scandalous chronicle.

Let us abstain from defending her; although even we should be convinced that she knew where to stop in that dangerous game of coquetry, she is not the less culpable in our eyes both towards La Rochefoucauld and herself, and we do not hesitate to say that she went so far as to deserve the calumny. Doubtless she was justly hurt by the incertitude of La Rochefoucauld, who, after having plunged her into civil war in 1648 with no other motive than that of his own interest, would have made her abandon it in 1651 through the same motive still; which at one moment impelled her towards the Fronde, at another brought her back to the Court, at the will of his fickle hopes, and linked her with Madame de Châtillon for the purpose of engaging Condé in negotiations the success of which involved their separation and procured her a prison in Normandy. Yes—she had grave cause of complaint against La Rochefoucauld. She might have quitted him, it is true, but not for another. She had only one means of covering, of almost condoning the single error of her life, which was to maintain faithful to it, or to renounce it for virtue and Heaven. And it is just that which Madame de Longueville appears to have done, if that sad and rapid episode had remained unknown; but there is no favourable shade for those personages who appear in the glaring front of the stage of this world; their slightest actions do not escape the formidable light of history: the weakness of a moment is recorded as an irredeemable error against them. That of Madame de Longue-

ville, fugitive as it may have been, dubious even as it was, sufficed to tarnish a fidelity until then victorious over so many trials; it needed to be atoned for by the sincere conversion which was speedily about to follow it, and by five-and-twenty years of the severest penitence; and still further it forces us to place Anne de Bourbon, in the record of great sentiments and exalted loves, above Heloise and Mademoiselle de la Vallière.

At any rate the assurance is consoling that this error, which we have attempted neither to conceal nor extenuate, is the single one perceptible in the private life of Madame de Longueville. But let us turn aside from these wretched instances of feminine fragility in one of the loftiest minds, in order to follow Condé and the march of events in Guienne.

We will first, however, by a brief retrospect, endeavour to render the shifting phases of the two Fronde wars more capable of being easily followed.

Dating from the arrest of Broussel, nothing could exceed the rapidity of events; the wheel of fortune had turned with such terrific mobility for those of her favourites who sought to attach themselves to it. The revolt had, in fact, broken out on the 26th of August, 1648; in January, 1649, the Court withdrew to Saint Germain, at the risk of never re-entering Paris; in April, the sword of Condé imposed the treaty of Saint Germain, and the King returned in October. Mazarin shortly afterwards believed himself strong enough to arrest, in January, 1650, Condé, Conti, and Longueville. A year after that bold *coup d'état* he was himself obliged to flee (February, 1651) from his enemies, and quit France. At the end of eight months, Mazarin returned with an army to the aid of royalty; but

it required two years of negotiations, intrigues, and patient waiting, it needed the errors which the indecision of the Duke d'Orleans brought about, the rash violence of Condé, urged onwards by his sister, it required, indeed, the entire ruin of France ere the Cardinal could, after having led the young King by the hand to the very gates of his capital, resume that place in the Louvre which he had sagaciously abandoned.

It is difficult to narrate occurrences in their proper order during this period: intrigues, broken promises, pledges given to two different parties at the same time, such were the smallest misdeeds of all these princes and prelates. As one step further in wrong-doing, they entered into negotiations with the foreigner, and invited armies across the frontier which devastated the provinces. And through what motives? Gondy wished to avenge his former mistress, whom Conti had rejected, and whom an agent of Condé, Maillard the shoemaker, had publicly insulted. Condé's pretensions were nothing less than dragging at his heels a squad of governors of towns and provinces who, at his summons, would be ever ready to raise the standard of revolt and to impose the will of their leader upon the head of the state, whether Minister, Queen, or King. Orleans would not yield one jot to his young cousin of the blood-royal, Condé; Madame de Longueville feared the severity of an outraged husband. The civil war, in forcing her to flee from one end of France to the other, or abroad, could alone delay her return to Normandy, her re-establishment beneath the conjugal roof, towards which she had conceived such an aversion.

Condé accused Gondy in the Parliament chamber of being author of a *factum* condemning severely the Prince's conduct.

La Rouchefoucauld, getting Gondy between two doors, treacherously seized, and was about to strangle him, had not the son of the first President, M. de Champlatreux, come to the rescue, at the very moment that one of the bullies in Condé's pay had drawn his dagger to despatch him.

Two days afterwards (17th of September) the King had attained his thirteenth year, and one day beyond; and by the ordonnance of Charles V. became of age and capable of governing for himself.

A change of ministry—Châteauneuf being recalled to head the Council and Molé to the Seals—deprived Condé of all hope of imposing the conditions of a reconciliation; therefore, as has been said, at a Council held at Chantilly with his chief adherents, Conti, and the Dukes de Nemours and La Rouchefoucauld, he determined to set out for Berri. The impartial student who examines the conduct of the Prince de Condé is at this juncture compelled to draw an indictment against him, under pain of belying his conscience and the truth; he must concede that Condé rashly engaged in civil war, and exerted himself to drag France into it, solely because he could not endure any authority above his own. He was desirous of being first in the State, of disposing at will among his creatures of honours, dignities, strongholds, and governments. On such conditions, he would have consented to let Mazarin, Orleans, De Retz, or any other, govern the realm, for the administration of which he felt himself that he had neither the slightest inclination nor the smallest capacity (October, 1651).

The Fronde is reputed, not without reason, to have been one of the most interesting as well as *diverting* periods in French history; that in which the volatile and frivolous vivacity of the national character shone with irresistible

comicality. How striking was the contrast between it in its main features and the great Civil War waged at the same time in our own country! Yet the Fronde had its serious —terrible aspect, too, in the wide-spread misery it entailed upon France, as may be seen from the valuable statistical researches of M. Feillet. That writer cites the following passage from the record of an eye-witness of what he describes:*—"No tongue can tell, no pen describe, no ear may hear that which we have seen (at Rheims, Châlons, Rethel, &c.). Famine and death on all sides, and bodies unburied. Those remaining alive pick up from the fields the rotten oat-straw, and make bread of it by mixing it with mud. Their faces are quite black; they have no longer the semblance of human beings, but that of phantoms. . . . War has placed every one on an equality; nobility lies upon straw, dares not beg, and dies. . . . Even lizards are eaten, and dogs which have been dead perhaps some eight days. . . . Moreover, in Picardy, a band of five hundred children, orphans, and under seven years of age, was met with. In Lorraine, the famished nuns quitted their convents and became mendicants: the poor creatures gave themselves up to be dishonoured for the sake of a morsel of bread. No pity, no remorse. An execrable and sanguinary war upon the weak. In the heart of the city of Rheims, a beautiful girl was chased from street to street for ten days by the licentious soldiery; and as they could not catch her, they killed her by shooting her down. In the vicinity of Angers, Alais, and Condom, upon all the highways of Lorraine, women and children were indiscriminately outraged, and left to die drenched in their blood."

* La Misère dans la Fronde.

What could be more *diverting?* The Duke de Lorraine—that restless knight-errant who preferred amusing himself with civil war to the quiet enjoyment of his throne—amused the noble ladies of his acquaintance with a recital of these pleasant incidents; his gallant army, he said, was quite a providence for the old women. . . .

After further pursuing his appalling statistics of the misery and horrors inflicted by the Fronde at a later date, M. Feillet remarks:—"And yet, notwithstanding all this suffering, which we have only cursorily sketched, at Court nothing else was thought of but fêtes and diversions; for the young and brilliant bevy of Mazarin's nieces had come to increase the circle of beauties whom the youthful King and his gay courtiers vied with each other in paying homage to, and entertaining. The warm attachment of Louis for more than one of his Minister's nieces, and especially Marie de Mancini, is well known. In imitation of their Sovereign, the youthful nobility and a large portion of the city gallants plunged into unrestrained dissipation—intervals of licentiousness ever succeeding like periods of turbulence and anarchy. Such heartless indifference to the sufferings of the people on the part of the King and his Court evoked the following couplet, which was put into the mouth of Louis by a contemporary pamphleteer:—

> "Si la France est en deuil, qu'elle pleure et soupire;
> Pour moi, je veux chasser, galantiser et rire."

But we are somewhat anticipating events, and therefore return to them in the order of time.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

CONDÉ'S ADVENTUROUS EXPEDITION.

CONDÉ passed several months in Guienne, occupied with strengthening and extending the insurrection at the head of which he had placed himself, and in repulsing as far as possible in the south the royal army, commanded by the skilful and experienced Count d'Harcourt. Amidst very varied successes, he learned from different quarters the bad turn which the Fronde's affairs was taking in the heart of the kingdom, the intrigues of De Retz who held the key of Paris, and the deplorable state of the army on the banks of the Loire.

On receiving these tidings at Bordeaux in the month of March, 1652, Condé saw clearly the double danger which menaced him, and immediately faced it in his wonted manner. Instead of awaiting events which were on the eve of taking place at a distance, he determined on anticipating them, and formed an extraordinary resolution, of a character very much resembling his great military manœuvres, which at first sight appears extravagant, but which the gravest reason justifies, and the temerity of which even is only another form of high prudence. He formed the design of slipping out of Bordeaux, traversing the lines of Count d'Harcourt, to get over in the best way he might the hundred and fifty leagues which separated him from the Loire and

Paris, to appear there suddenly, and to place himself at the head of his affairs.

He left behind him in Guienne a force sufficiently imposing to allow of it there awaiting in security the successful results he was about to seek. In possessing himself of Agen, Bergerac, Perigueux, Cognac, and even for a moment of Saintes, and by pushing his conquests into Haute Guienne, on the side of Mont-de-Marsan, Dax, and Pau, he had made Bordeaux the capital of a small but rich and populous kingdom, surrounded on all sides by a belt of strongholds, communicating with the sea by the Gironde, and admirably placed for attack or defence. This kingdom, backed as it was by Spain, was capable of receiving continuous succour from Santander and St. Sebastian, and a Spanish fleet could approach by the Tour de Corduan, bringing subsidies and troops, whilst Count de Dognon's fleet, sailing from the islands of Ré and Oléron to join it, might easily surround and even beat the royal fleet, then forming at Brouage under the Duke de Vendôme. In 1650, during the imprisonment of the princes, Bordeaux had defended itself for more than six months against a considerable army with the young king at its head, and which was directed by Mazarin in person. Condé, and all his family were adored there, by reason of the hatred felt for his predecessor, the imperious Duke d'Epernon. The Bordeaux parliament was also equally involved in the Fronde as was that of Paris, with which it had allied itself by a solemn declaration. Under the parliament was a brave and ardent people, which furnished a numerous militia.

Condé had named the Prince de Conti his lieutenant-general—a prince of the blood giving lustre to authority, dominating all rivalries, an appointment calculated to render obedience more easy. He was aware of Conti's levity, but

he knew also that he was wanting neither in intelligence nor courage. He believed in the ascendency which Madame de Longueville had always exercised over her brother, and he hoped she would guide him still. He had confidence in that high-souled sister whom formerly he had so warmly loved; and although intrigues and a sinister influence, to which we shall shortly further allude, had diminished the high admiration he had had for her, and to which he later returned, he reckoned upon her intelligence, upon her pride, upon that lofty courage of which she had given so many proofs at Stenay. At his sister's side he left his wife Claire Clémence de Maillé-Brézé, who had behaved so admirably in the first Guienne war. He left her *enceinte* with their second child, and with her he gave to Bordeaux and placed as it were in pledge in its hands, to hold the place of himself, the Duke d'Enghien, the hope and stay of his house, the peculiar object of his tenderness. So that there, he left behind him a government, he thought, which would look well alike in the eyes of France and of Europe.

In reality, to what did Condé aspire? To constitute himself the head of the nobility against the Court? The nobles thought it harsh to be so treated. To commence another Fronde? To do that, it was necessary to have the parliaments under his thumb; and he had already been compelled to threaten the deputies of that of Aix with the bastinado. Did he look forward to an independent principality, as he later on desired to obtain from the Spaniards? Or rather did he think of snatching from the Duke d'Orleans the lieutenant-generalship? It is difficult to divine what may have passed through his capricious brain. He was constant in nothing. It was seen later still that he would very willingly have changed his religion, offering himself on the one side

to Cromwell, and to become a protestant in order to have an English army; on the other to the Pope, if he would help to get him elected King of Poland.

The income of the Condés in 1609 amounted to ten thousand livres, and in 1649, besides the Montmorency estates, they held an enormous portion of France. First, by the Great Condé, they had Burgundy, Berri, the marshes of Lorraine, a dominant fortress in the Bourbonnais that held in check four provinces. Secondly, by Conti, Champagne. Thirdly, by Longueville, their sister's husband, Normandy. Fourthly, the Admiralty, and Saumur, the chief fortress of Anjou, were in the hands of the brother of Condé's wife; they fell in through his death, and were sold again by them as though they were a family birthright. Later still, they negotiated for the possession of Guienne and Provence.

Amidst the cares of administration and of war, Condé carried on an assiduous correspondence with Chavigny, then fallen into disgrace, who kept him well informed of the state of affairs at Court and in Paris. They had assumed quite a new face during the last few months. Mazarin in his exile had not learned without inquietude the ever-increasing success of Châteauneuf. He saw him active and determined, accepted as a chief by all colleagues, skilfully seconded by the keeper of the seals, Molé, and by Marshal de Villeroi, the king's governor, an ambiguous personage, very ambitious at bottom, and jealous of the Cardinal's favour with the Queen. Châteauneuf, it is true, had only entered the Cabinet under the agreement of shortly recalling Mazarin; but he incessantly asked for fresh delay; he tried to make the Queen comprehend the danger of a precipitate return,—the Fronde ready to arouse itself anew, the Duke d'Orleans and the Coadjutor resuming their ancient opposition, and royalty

finding itself once more without any solid support. Anne of Austria gradually acquiescing in these wise counsels, Mazarin, who at first had with difficulty restrained the impatient disposition of the Queen, finding her grown less eager, became alarmed: he saw that he was lost should he allow such a rival to establish himself.* Therefore, passing suddenly from an apparent resignation to an extraordinary audacity, he had, towards the end of November 1651, broken his ban, quitted his retreat at Dinan, and and had resolutely entered France with a small force collected together by his two faithful friends, the Marquis de Navailles and the Count de Broglie, and led by Marshal Hocquincourt. He had by main strength surmounted every obstacle, braved the decrees and the deputies of the parliament, reached Poitiers where the Queen and young Louis the Fourteenth had eagerly welcomed him; and there, in January 1652, after speedily ridding himself of Châteauneuf, too proud and too able to be resigned to hold the second rank, he had again taken in hand the reins of government.

This bold conduct, which probably saved Mazarin, came also to the succour of Condé. The second and irreparable disgrace of the minister of the old Fronde had exasperated him as well as had the umbrage given him by the Duke d'Orleans. He thought himself tricked by the Queen, and had loudly complained of it. Condé's friends had not failed to seize that occasion to reconcile him with the Duke, and to negotiate a fresh alliance between them; and as previously the Fronde and the Queen had been united against Condé, so also at the end of January

* Mad. de Motteville, tom. v. p. 96.

1652, that Prince and the Frônde in almost its entirety were united against Mazarin.

Madame de Chevreuse alone, with her most intimate friends, remained faithful to her hatred and the Queen, dreading far less Mazarin than Condé, and choosing between them both for once and for all with her well-known firmness and resolution. De Retz trimmed, followed the Duke d'Orleans, using tact with the Queen, so that he might not lose the hat, and without engaging himself personally with Condé.

If Burnet is to be believed, it was at this conjunction that Condé made an offer to Cromwell to turn Huguenot, and embrace the faith of his ancestors, in order to secure the aid of the English Puritans.

However that might be, it was not illusory to think that with such a government and the continual assistance of Spain, Bordeaux might hold out for at least a year, and give Condé time to strike some decisive blows. The resolution that he took was therefore as rational as it was great. It would have been a sovereign imprudence to remain in Guienne merely to engage Harcourt in a series of trifling skirmishes, and after much time and trouble take a few little paltry towns, when in the heart of the kingdom a treason or a defeat might irreparably involve the loss of everything, and condemn Bordeaux to share the common fate, after a more or less prolonged existence. Taking one thing with another, Guienne was doubtless a considerable accessory; but the grand struggle was not to be made there; it was at Paris and upon the banks of the Loire that the destiny of the Fronde and that of Condé too must be decided; it was thither, therefore, that he must hasten. Every day brought him tidings that jealousies, divisions, quarrels were increasing in the army, and he trembled to receive,

some morning, news that Turenne and Hocquincourt had beaten Nemours and Beaufort, and were marching on Paris. Desirous of preventing at any price a disaster so irreparable, he resolved to rush to the point where the danger was supreme, where his unexpected presence would strike terror into the souls of his enemies, revive the courage of his partisans and turn fortune to his side. When Cæsar, on arriving in Greece, learned that the fleet which was following him with his army on board, had been dispersed and destroyed by that of Pompey, he flung himself alone into a fisherman's bark under cover of night to cross the sea into Asia to seek for the legions of Antony, and return with them to gain the battle of Pliarsalia. When Napoleon learned in Egypt the state of France, from the shameful doings of the Directory, the agitation of parties, and that already more than one general was meditating another 18th of Brumaire, he did not hesitate, and however rash it might appear to attempt to pass through the English fleet in a small craft, at the risk of being taken, or sent to the bottom, he dared every peril, and by dint of address and audacity succeeded in gaining the shores of France. Condé did the same, and at the end of March 1652, he undertook to make his way from the banks of the Gironde to the banks of the Loire, without other escort than that of a small number of intrepid friends, and sustained solely by the vivid consciousness of the necessity of that bold step, his familiarity with and secret liking for danger, his incomparable presence of mind and his customary gaiety.

On Palm Sunday, 1652, Condé set forth upon his adventurous expedition. He was accompanied by six persons, La Rochefoucauld and his youthful son, the Prince de Marcillac, the Count de Guitaut, the Count de Chavagnac, a valet

named Rochefort, and the indefatigable Gourville, under whose directions all the arrangements of the journey seem to have been contrived. The whole party were disguised as common troopers, and each took a false name, even amongst themselves. For some time they followed the Bordeaux road, and using many precautions proceeded until they reached Cahusac, where they encountered some troops belonging to La Rochefoucauld; but being anxious almost as much to avoid their own partizans as the enemy, Condé and his companions hid themselves in a barn, while Gourville went out to forage. He suceeded in procuring some scanty fare; and they rode on till some hours had passed after nightfall, when they reached a little wayside inn, where Condé volunteered to cook an omelet for the whole party. The hand, however, which could wield a truncheon with such effect, proved somewhat too violent for the frying-pan, and in the attempt to turn the omelet, he threw the whole hissing mass into the fire.

The little band having reached a certain spot, quitted the main road, and began to traverse the enemy's lines. For eight days they encountered many perilous incidents and underwent incredible fatigue, riding throughout the same horses, never stopping more than two hours to eat or sleep, avoiding towns and crossing rivers as they best could; threading at first the gorges of the Auvergne mountains, then descending by the Bec d'Allier, and making their way to the Loire. The memoirs of La Rochefoucauld and Gourville must be consulted for the details of that extraordinary journey, and all the dangers it presented. No less than ten times did they escape being taken and slain. Their wearied horses at last could carry them no longer. La Rochefoucauld was tormented by the gout, and his son was so

worn out with fatigue that he fell asleep as he went. Condé, whose iron frame resisted to the last, was alone indefatigable, sleeping and working at will, and always cheerful and good humoured.

Upon approaching Gien, at which place the Court then was, Condé had twice very nearly fallen into the hands of parties sent out to take him alive or dead. Having escaped almost by a miracle, on the last occasion, soon after reaching Châtillon, he gained information that the army of Beaufort and Nemours lay at about eight leagues from that place, and hastened with all speed to join it. At length, to his great joy, he saw the advanced guard before him, and several of the troopers came galloping up with a loud "*Qui vive!*" Some of them, however, almost instantly recognised Condé, and shouts of joy and surprise soon made known through the whole army what had occurred.

He found the forces of the Fronde as divided as were its chiefs. He took the command of it immediately; thus doing away with the principal cause of the jealousy existing between Nemours and Beaufort. He reviewed and reunited it, gave it one day's rest, seized, without striking a blow, on Montargis and Château-Renard, and threw himself with the utmost rapidity on the royal army. It was scattered in quarters distant from each other for the convenience of foraging, and on account of the little dread with which Beaufort and Nemours had inspired it. Marshal d'Hocquincourt was encamped at Bleneau, and Turenne a little farther off, at Briare; the two Marshals were to unite their forces on the morrow. Condé did not give them time for that: that same evening, and during the nights of the 6th and 7th of April, 1652, he fell upon the head-quarters of

Hocquincourt, overwhelmed them, and succeeded in routing the rest, thanks to one of those charges in flank which he in person ever led so energetically. Hocquincourt, after fighting like a gallant soldier, was forced to fall back for some leagues in the direction of Auxerre, having lost all his baggage and three thousand horse. No sooner did Turenne hear of the fact, than he sprang into the saddle, and marched with some infantry both to the assistance of his brother officer and to the defence of the King, who, resting secure at Gien, might have fallen into the hands of the rebels. As he advanced through the darkness of the night, the Marshal saw the quarters of Hocquincourt in one blaze of fire, and exclaiming, with the appreciation which genius has of genius, "The Prince de Condé is arrived!" he hurried on with the utmost speed. Having neither cavalry nor artillery, and having sent word to Hocquincourt to rally to him as soon as possible, he marched on in good order throughout that long and dark night to join the bulk of his troops which Navailles and Palluan were bringing up. For an instant he halted in a plain where there stood a rather dense wood on his left, with a marsh on his right. Those around Condé thought it an advantageous post; Condé judged very differently. "If M. de Turenne makes a stand there," said he, "I shall soon cut him to pieces; but he will take good care not to do so."* He had not left off speaking when he saw that Turenne was already retiring, too skilful to await Condé in the plain and expose himself to the Prince's formidable manœuvres. A little further off, he found a position much more favourable; there he firmly posted his force, determined to give battle.

* It is Tavannes who has preserved the details of this interesting incident.

In vain did his officers urge him not to hazard an action, not to risk the last army which remained to the monarchy, and to confine himself to covering Gien whilst awaiting the coming of Hocquincourt. "*No*," replied he, "*we must conquer or perish here.*"

Turenne, it is true, was very inferior in cavalry to Condé, but he had a powerful and well-served artillery. Having encouraged his troops to do their duty, he posted himself upon an eminence which he covered with infantry and artillery, drew up his cavalry below in a plain too narrow to permit of Condé deploying his own, and which could only be reached by traversing a thick wood and a causeway intersected by ditches and boggy ground. From such strong position, Condé could, in his turn, recognise his illustrious disciple. No great manœuvres were then practicable, and as time did not permit of an attempt to turn Turenne, it was necessary to crush him out of hand, if that were possible, before he could effect a junction with Hocquincourt. The defile was the key of the position; and both sides fought therein with equal fierceness. Turenne defended himself sword in hand, and upon the six squadrons which Condé hurled against him he opened a battery, as they passed, with terrible execution, showing a courage equal to that of his heroic adversary. Condé, judging from what he now saw, believed the position in the hands of Turenne to be impregnable; and it being too late to execute any other manœuvres with success during that day, he continued to cannonade the royalist army till the evening, without any other attempt to bring it to a battle.

Napoleon has not spared Condé in this affair any more than other critics. He sums all their opinions up in one piquant phrase, which it appears he was unable to resist, and

which made him smile in uttering it. "Condé," said he, "for that once, was wanting in boldness." The dictum is both brief and incisive, but there was no foundation for it, in a military point of view. There was, in truth, no want of boldness on Condé's part throughout that campaign: far from it, his whole line of conduct was a succession of audacious actions and combinations. What could be bolder than that forced journey of nearly ten days for more than one hundred and fifty miles with half-a-dozen followers to go and take the command of an army? What bolder than the resolution taken out of hand to throw himself between Turenne and Hocquincourt, to cut in two the royal army and to disperse one half of it before attacking the other? Did Condé lose a moment in marching against Turenne and pursuing him sword in hand? Was it his fault that he had to cope with a great captain, who knew how to select an excellent position, and to maintain himself in it with immovable firmness? In the attack of that position, did Napoleon mean to reproach Condé with want of boldness? Turenne, it is true, covered himself with glory, for he successfully resisted Condé; but Condé, in not having been victorious, was not in the slightest degree beaten. The strategy, therefore, on that occasion was irreproachable. As will be seen, it was in his policy only that he failed. Condé quitted the army at a very ill-timed moment, in our opinion, but that step was taken through considerations which had nothing to do with the science of war.

To revert for a moment to this much-criticised action of Bleneau. Towards night, Hocquincourt appeared upon the field, having rallied a considerable part of his cavalry. Condé then retired, finding that his attempt was frustrated, and took the way to Montargis; while Turenne rejoined

the Court, and was received by the Queen with all the gratitude which such great services merited. Her first words went to thank him for *having placed the crown a second time upon her son's head.*

The terror and confusion which had reigned in Gien during the whole of the preceding night and that day may very well be conceived when it is remembered that the safety of the King himself, as well as the Queen, was at stake, and that the life of the favourite Minister might at any moment be placed at the mercy of his bitterest enemy, justified in putting him to death immediately by the highest legal authority in the realm. Neither were the ill-disciplined and irregular forces of Condé at all desirable neighbours to the troop of ladies who had followed the Court; and, as soon as it was known that Condé had fallen upon Hocquincourt, the whole of the little town was one scene of dismay and confusion.

The royal army and that of Condé now both marched towards Paris, nearly upon two parallel lines. But the great distress which the Court suffered from want of money caused almost as much insubordination to be apparent amongst the troops of the King as amongst those of the rebels. Little respect was shown to Mazarin himself; and the young King was often treated with but scanty ceremony, and provided for but barely.

After quitting the neighbourhood of Gien, Condé, urged by the desire of directing in person the negotiations and intrigues which were going on in Paris, left his army under the command of the celebrated Tavannes, and hastened to the capital. The Count de Tavannes, whom he had selected to fill his own place, was without doubt an excellent officer, one of the valiant *Petits-maîtres** who, upon the field of

battle, served as wings to the great soldier's thoughts, carried his orders everywhere, executed the most dangerous manœuvres, sometimes charging with an irresistible impetuosity, at others sustaining the most terrible onsets with a firmness and solidity beyond all proof. But though the intrepid Tavannes was quite capable of leading the division of a great army, he was not able enough to be its commander-in-chief, and he had not authority over the foreign troops which the Duke de Nemours had brought from Flanders, and which he made over, on accompanying Condé to Paris, to the command of the Count de Clinchamp. The army, thus divided, was capable of nothing great. Condé alone could finish what he had begun. Once engaged in the formidable enterprise that he had undertaken against the Queen and Mazarin, there was no safety for him but in carrying it out even to the end. He ought, therefore, to have waged war to the knife, if the expression be allowable, against Turenne, conquered or perished, and to have constrained Mazarin to flee for good and all to Germany or Italy, and the Queen to place in his hands the young King. To do that, Condé should have had a definite ambition, an object clearly determined; he ought to have plainly proposed to himself to assume the Regency, or at least the lieutenant-generalship of the kingdom in the place of Gaston, by will or by force, in order to concentrate all power in his own hands; that he might become, in short, a Cromwell or a William III.: and Condé was neither the one or the other. His mind had been perturbed by sinister dreams; but, as has been remarked, he had at heart an invincible fund of loyalty. Ambition was rather hovering round him than within himself. But

* Upon the *Petits Maîtres*, see Mad. de Sablé, chap. i. p. 44.

whatsoever it was he desired, and in every hypothesis—for his secret has remained between Heaven and himself—he did wrong in abandoning the Loire and leaving Turenne in force there. That was the true error he committed, and not in wanting audacity, as Napoleon supposed. It was not a military but a political error—immense and irreparable. He might have crushed Turenne, and ought to have attempted it, but he let him slip from his grasp. The opportunity once lost did not return. Turenne until then was only second in rank; by a glorious resistance he acquired from that moment, and it was forced upon him to maintain, the importance of a rival of Condé. Mazarin grew from day to day more emboldened; royalty, which had been on the very brink of ruin, again rose erect, and the Court drew towards Paris; whilst, prompted by his evil genius, quitting the field of battle wherein lay his veritable strength, Condé went away to waste his precious time in a labyrinth of intrigues for which he was not fitted, and in which he lost himself and the Fronde.

CHAPTER II.

POLITICAL AND GALLANT INTRIGUES—THE DUCHESS DE CHÂTILLON'S SWAY OVER CONDÉ—SHAMEFUL CONSPIRACY AGAINST MADAME DE LONGUEVILLE.

CONDÉ arrived in Paris on the 11th of April, and found everything in the utmost confusion. It would be impossible to follow all the petty intrigues, or even make allusion to all the events which affected the relative situations of the parties in the capital; but it may be observed that the tendency of both parties was to hold themselves in the neighbourhood of Paris. The chiefs of the Fronde hurried into the city, to receive the congratulations due to their exploits from the fair politicians who had won them to their cause. The Queen also established her head-quarters near the capital, to be ready for any turn of popular sentiment in her favour, and to hear the reports of her spies on the proceedings of her enemies. She knew what dances were to be given, and who were to attend the assemblies of the duchesses of the Fronde. On one occasion when Turenne knew that half the officers of Condé's army were engaged to a brilliant fête at the Duchess de Montbazon's, he made an attack on the enemy's camp, and was only repulsed by the steadiness of some old soldiers, who gave time for reinforcements to arrive. But the crisis was at hand; for each party began to be suspicious of the other gaining over its supporters—Mazarin lavishing promises of place and money,

and the Duchess de Châtillon, invested with full powers by Condé, appearing in the opposite camp as the most irresistible ambassadress that ever was seen.

Thus matters stood in the early summer of 1652, and "all that was most subtle and serious in politics," La Rochefoucauld tells us, "was brought under the attention of Condé to induce him to take one of two courses—to make peace or to continue the war; when Madame de Châtillon imbued him with a design for peace by means the most agreeable. She thought that so great a boon might be the work of her beauty, and mingling ambition with the design of making a new conquest, she desired at the same time to triumph over the Prince de Condé's heart and to derive pecuniary advantages from her political negotiations."

We have already cursorily mentioned the Duchess de Châtillon: it is now indispensable, in order to thoroughly understand what is about to follow, to know something more of that celebrated personage.

Isabella Angelique de Montmorency was one of the two daughters of that brave and unfortunate Count de Montmorency Bouteville, who, the victim of a false point of honour and of an outrageous passion for duelling, was decapitated on the Place de Grève, on the 21st of June, 1627. She was sister of François de Montmorency, Count de Bouteville, better known as the illustrious Marshal de Luxembourg. Born in 1626, she had been married in 1645 to the last of the Colignys, the Duke de Châtillon, one of the heroes of Lens, killed in the action of Charenton in 1649. Left a widow at twenty-three, her rare loveliness won for her a thousand adorers. She was one of the queens of politics and gallantry during the Fronde; and even, after manifold amours, at thirty-eight could boast of captivating

the Duke de Mecklenbourg, who espoused her in 1664. To beauty, Madame de Châtillon added great intelligence, but an intelligence wholly devoted to intrigue. She was vain and ambitious, and at the same time profoundly selfish, moderately scrupulous, and somewhat of the school of Madame de Montbazon. While both were young, she had smitten Condé; but he had thought no more of her after becoming absorbed with his love for Mademoiselle de Vigean. After that elevated passion, so sorrowfully terminated,* and after the fugitive emotion with which the lovely and virtuous Mademoiselle de Toussy could still inspire him, Condé stifled his chevalaresque instincts and bade adieu to the *haute galanterie* of his youth and of the Hôtel de Rambouillet. A few insignificant and commonplace attachments, of which no record has survived, alone excepted, Madame de Châtillon only is known to have captivated his heart for the last time; and that *liaison* exercised upon Condé and his affairs, at the epoch at which we have arrived, an influence sufficiently great for history to occupy itself therewith, if it would not be content with retracing consequences and as it were the outline of events which pass across the stage of the world without being understood, without penetrating to the true causes which are to be discovered in the characters and passions of mankind. And, of all passions, there is none at once more energetic and wide-grasping than love. It occupies an immense place in human life, and in the loftiest as well as the lowliest conditions. In our own times, we have seen it make and mar kings. In an earlier epoch, by detaining Antony too long in Cleopatra's arms at Alexandria, the formidable tempest gathered above his head which

* Mademoiselle de Vigean took the veil on the prince being forced to marry the niece of Cardinal Richelieu.

nearly overwhelmed him at Munda. It played a great part in the war which Henry IV. was about to undertake, when a sudden death arrested him. One can scarcely resist a smile on seeing historians for the most part taking no account of it, as a thing too frivolous, and consigning it altogether to private life, as though that which agitates the soul so powerfully were not the principle of that which blazes forth exteriorly! No, the empire of beauty knows no limitation, and in no instance did it show itself more potent than over those great hearts of which Alexander the Great, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and Henry IV. of France were the owners. We may well place Condé amongst such illustrious company.

One graceful memento of Madame de Châtillon's power over Condé has descended to our own day. At Châtillon-sur-Loing, in what remains of the ancient château of the Colignys, which Isabelle de Montmorency derived from her husband and left to her brother, in that salon of the noble heir of the Luxembourgs, as precious for history as for art, wherein may be seen collected together, by the side of the sword of the Constable Anne, the likeness of Luxembourg on horseback, with his proud and piercing glance, as well as the full-length portrait of Charlotte Marguerite de Montmorency, Princess de Condé, in widow's weeds, there is also a large and magnificent picture, representing a young woman of ravishing beauty, with perfectly regular features, with the loveliest bright chestnut hair, grey eyes of the softest expression, a swan-like neck, of a slight and graceful figure, painted with a natural grandeur, and embellished with all the attractions of youth, enhanced by an exquisite air of coquetry. She is seated in an easy attitude. One of her hands, carelessly extended, holds a bouquet of flowers; the

other rests upon the mane of a lion, whose head is drawn full-face, and whose flaming eyes are unmistakably the terrible eyes of Condé when seen with his sword drawn. Here we behold the beautiful Duchess de Châtillon at twenty-five or twenty-six, and very nearly such as she has taken care to describe herself in the *Divers Portraits* of Mademoiselle de Montpensier. The head stands out wonderfully. It would be impossible to instance a more charming countenance, but it is somewhat deficient in character and grandeur, and quite different from that of Madame de Longueville. The latter's face was not so regularly symmetrical, but it wore a far loftier expression, and an air of supreme distinction characterised her entire person.

Madame de Châtillon and Madame de Longueville had been brought up together, and very much attached during the whole of their early youth. By degrees there sprung up a rivalry of beauty between them, and they quarrelled thoroughly when Madame de Longueville perceived after the death of Châtillon, that the young and beautiful widow, at the same time that she was welcoming very decidedly the homage of the Duke de Nemours, had also evident designs upon Condé. Madame de Longueville had her own reasons for not being then very severe upon others, but she knew the self-seeking heart of the fair Duchess, and she was alarmed for her brother's sake. She feared lest Madame de Châtillon, having great need of Court favour, might retain Condé in the engagements which he had with Mazarin, while she herself was forced to drag him into the Fronde. The quarrel was renewed in 1651, as we have seen, and it was in full force in 1652. Madame de Châtillon and Madame de Longueville were then disputing for Condé's heart: the one drew him towards the Court, fully hoping

that the Court would not be ungrateful to her; the other urged him more and more upon the path of war. We have related how Madame de Longueville, well knowing the strength of Condé's friendship for the Duke de Nemours, who was in the chains of the Duchess, very inopportunely mingled politics and coquetry in Berri, and tried the power of her charms upon Nemours, in order to carry him off from Madame de Châtillon and from the party of peace. No one ever knew how far Madame de Longueville committed herself on that occasion; but, as we have remarked, the slightest appearance was enough for La Rochefoucauld. As he had only sought his own advantage in the Fronde, not finding it therein, he began to grow tired, and asked for nothing better than to put an end to the wandering and adventurous life he had been for some years leading by a favourable reconciliation. Madame de Longueville's conduct in cutting him to the quick in what remained of his tender feelings for her, and especially in the most sensitive portion of his heart—its vanity and self-love—gave him an opportunity or a pretext, which he seized upon with eagerness, to break off a *liaison* become contrary to his interests. Thus, in April, 1652, when he returned to Paris with Condé, and there found Madame de Châtillon, he entered at once into all her prejudices and all her designs, as he afterwards owned to Madame de Motteville:* he placed at her service all that was in him of skill and ability, and descended to the indulgence of a revenge against Madame de Longueville wholly unworthy of an honourable man, and which after the

* Mad. de Motteville, tom. v. p. 132. "M. de la Rochefoucauld m'a dit que la jalousie et la vengeance le firent agir soigneusement, et qu'il fit tout ce que Mad. de Châtillon voulut."

lapse of two centuries is as revolting to every right-minded person as it was to his contemporaries.

Madame de Châtillon was not contented with carrying off the giddy and inconstant Duke de Nemours from his new love, then absent; she exacted at his hands the public and outrageous sacrifice of her rival. The reprisals of feminine vanity did not stop there: the ambitious and intriguing Duchess went further, she undertook to ruin Madame de Longueville in her brother's estimation. With that object she set herself, with the assistance of La Rochefoucauld, to decry her in every way to him, and sought even to persuade him that his sister was not attached to him as she made it appear, and that she had promised the Duke de Nemours to serve him at his expense; whilst Madame de Longueville had never dreamed in any way of separating Nemours from Condé, but only from her, Madame de Châtillon, purposely to engage him more deeply in Condé's interests, in the light that she understood them.

Madame de Longueville's policy was very simple, and it was the true one, the Fronde once admitted. Assuredly, it would have been better alike for Madame de Longueville, for Condé, and for France not to have entered upon that fatal path by which the national greatness was for ten years arrested, and through which the house of Condé very nearly perished; but, after having embraced that sinister step, no other alternative remained to a firm and logical mind than to resolutely pursue its triumph. And that triumph, in Madame de Longueville's eyes, was the overthrow of Mazarin, a necessary condition of the domination of Condé. Such was the end pointed out to her by La Rochefoucauld when engaging her in the Fronde at the beginning of 1648, and she had never lost sight of it. It was to attain it that

she had flung herself into the Civil War, and that she had ended by dragging therein her brother; that, worsted at Paris in 1649, she had striven in 1650 to raise Normandy; that she had risked her life, braved exile, made alliance with a foreign enemy, and unfurled at Stenay the banner of the Princes. In 1651, she had advised the resumption of arms, and now she maintained the impossibility of laying them down, and that, instead of losing himself in useless negotiations with the subtle and skilful Cardinal, it was upon his sword alone that Condé should rely. She thought him incapable of extricating himself advantageously from the intrigues by which he was surrounded, and therefore urged him towards the field of battle. She had always exercised a great sway over him, because he knew that her heart was of like temper to his own; and if passion had not blinded him, he would have rejected with disdain the odious accusations they had dared to raise against her, as he had done in 1643, in the affair of the letters attributed to her by Madame de Montbazon: he would have easily recognised that Madame de Châtillon, Nemours, and La Rochefoucauld would not have joined to blacken her in his eyes, as a vulgar creature ever ready to betray him for the latest lover, save in the manifest design of embroiling them both, of securing him, and of making him subserve their particular views. Nemours alone knew what had taken place during that journey from Montrond to Bordeaux, and the man who is base enough to constitute himself the denouncer of a woman to whom he has paid the warmest homage, is not very worthy of being believed on his word. Besides Nemours has not himself spoken, but Madame de Châtillon and Rochefoucauld, who have attributed to him certain sentiments, and we know with what motive.

It would be difficult to imagine a conspiracy more disgraceful than that formed at this juncture against Madame de Longueville; and that feature in it the more shameful perhaps was that La Rochefoucauld himself boasts of having invented and worked this machinery, as he terms it. The three conspirators were dumb, but through different but equally despicable reasons. Madame de Châtillon desired singly to govern Condé, and alone to represent him at Court, in order to reap the profits of the negotiation. Nemours was desirous of pleasing Madame de Châtillon, and looked forward also to have his share in the great advantages promised him; and, lastly, La Rochefoucauld was actuated by a pitiless spirit of revenge, and in the hope of a reconciliation necessary to his own immediate fortunes.

But here arose a delicate point, if we may speak of delicacy in such a matter: in the whole cabal, the least odious was, after all, the Duke de Nemours, more frivolous than perfidious, and who was deeply smitten with Madame de Châtillon. He loved her, and was beloved. The return of the Prince de Condé, with his well-declared pretensions, caused him cruel suffering, and his rage threatened to upset the well-concerted scheme. The lovely lady herself could not sometimes help being embarrassed between an imperious prince and a jealous lover. Happily the future author of the *Maxims* was at hand. La Rochefoucauld took upon himself to arrange everything in the best way possible. It was not very difficult for him to direct Madame de Châtillon how to manage Condé and Nemours both at once, and to contrive in such a way that she might secure them both. He made the moody Nemours comprehend that, in truth, he had no reason to complain of an inevitable *liaison*, "qui ne lui devoit pas être suspecte, puisqu'on voulait lui en rendre

compte, et ne s'en servir que pour lui donner la principale part aux affaires." At the same time, "he urged M. le Prince to occupy himself with Madame de Châtillon, and to give her in freehold the estate of Merlon." In such a fashion, thanks to the honest intervention of La Rochefoucauld, a good understanding was kept up, and the conspiracy went quietly forwards. Condé had no mistrust whatever. A veil had been cast over his eyes; his martial disposition lulled asleep in the lap of pleasure and in a labyrinth of negotiations, and cradled in the hope of an approaching peace.

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